

child study

A quarterly journal of parent education

Permissiveness re-examined



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Fall 1984

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Sixty-five cents a copy Vol. XXXI, No. 4 \$2.50 a Year

EDITOR: MARGARET C. DAWSON, EDITORIAL BOARD: Aline B. Auerbach, Elizabeth Bradley, Gunnar Dybwad, Pauline Evans, Josette Frank, Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Elizabeth Pope, Anna W. M. Wolf. BUSINESS MANAGER: Lila J. Lifson.

Every issue of CHILD STUDY is completely indexed in the Education Index.

CHILD STUDY re-entered as second-class matter September 19, 1947, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1952, by Child Study Association of America, Inc. Published by the Child Study Association, 133 East 74th Street, New York 21, N. Y. Quarterly in Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer issues, 65 cents a copy, \$2.50 a year, \$4.50 for two years, \$6.00 for three years. Add 25 cents annually for all foreign subscriptions.

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Reflection vs. reaction

When the Editors of CHILD STUDY speak of "re-examining" a concept that has had a profound influence on child care theory and practice, we mean exactly that—a second look, taken in the light of experience. In no sense do we mean to imply that the time may have come to jettison the idea under consideration.

It is particularly important to make this clear in view of the many recent comments, mostly by persons unacquainted with the thinking behind the concept of permissiveness and its results, which have assigned this philosophy the villain's role in discussions of juvenile delinquency. The linking of permissiveness with delinquency has not only promoted a "get tough" approach to school and community problems—despite the proven failure of this approach—it has tended also to discourage some parents of non-delinquent children from making use of the knowledge of child development that is available to them.

For this reason, it is wise for those who would rather rely on study than emotionalism (and in this group we naturally include the readers of CHILD STUDY) to be objective in trying to assess both gains and mistakes made in the field of child care. It is in this spirit that we present in this issue some reflections on the concept of permissiveness as we understand it today, and its application to the rearing and educating of our children.

Between letting the child "express" his
every impulse, and constantly thwarting him,
there is the middle ground of discriminating guidance

By Bertram J. Gosliner

Permissiveness and parents' responsibilities

Any discussion of parental permissiveness must take into consideration that this loosely defined and embattled concept has an emotional connotation no less violent or partisan than "modern art" or some contemporary political controversy. Consideration of the value of permissiveness as a method of bringing up children was powerfully stimulated in the great revolution by which mechanistic psychology, using methods more suitable for the study of physics, and chemistry, was overthrown by dynamic psychology with its emphasis on the inner life. Every revolution carries with it the seeds of its potential downfall in the excesses of extremists within its ranks. The psychological revolution sired by Freud at the turn of the century is no exception. The concept and application of permissiveness has suffered misinterpretation and become confused as the result of zealots representing extreme and irreconcilable opinions.

As a result of the new approach to the study of the dynamics of human behavior, new psychological insights were brought to light. These insights were utilized in an exaggerated way by some as a guide in rearing their children. The hope was to prevent the occurrence of emotional disorders. Inasmuch as neuroses are a result of repression of instinctual drives, it seemed logical to them that the prevention of neuroses would be dependent upon avoiding such

repressions. Frustration for the child was minimized and gratification maximized. It was accepted that during the first five or six years the child would pass through various stages of sexual and aggressive activity. Therefore thumb-sucking, biting, handling and smearing of feces, masturbation, and sex play with others were not discouraged. Curiosity about the "facts of life" was satisfied at the earliest opportunity in full detail regardless of emotional or intellectual readiness. Children were allowed to be present when their parents were nude or occupied with bathroom activities. The weight of parental authority was replaced by appeals to reason and by frequent interpretations of the child's unconscious motivations.

Many of the children so brought up became emotionally disturbed. They were egocentric, intolerant of frustration, lacking in control and perseverance. They reacted with irritation and antagonism to the laws and customs of their society. Authority and enemy became synonymous. These children were unable to live harmoniously with their fellows or themselves. The inevitable buffetings of the outer world engendered anxiety and resulted either in withdrawal to a more gratifying fantasy world or in anti-social activity directed at an environment which appeared to them to be noxious and unfair.

In retrospect we can see that this attempt

was doomed to fail. It did not take into account that a child needs protection from the dangers arising from within as well as from without. The human child needs many years of physical dependence upon his parents. He is encouraged to take advantage of the new skills and gifts that growth and development bring him. His failures as he tries to utilize these new abilities are met with benign tolerance, but precocity for its own sake without regard for the child's well-being is not sanctioned. Although he may walk well and desire independence, the child will not be allowed to cross the street alone until he can fathom the complexities of street signals and the possibilities of injury by traffic. During this time his parents, through their experience and their greater understanding, warn and guide their child about the possible dangers to him in the environment. Any other course would be abdication of parental duty. That a child must be warned away from cliffs, fires, dashing into the street, etc., is taken for granted. That this interferes with his liberty and that sometimes parental admonitions cannot be accompanied by full explanation is also accepted without question.

The inner dangers

During these years of independence, the child is subject to powerful impulses from within. It is just as necessary that he have help in coping with these inner dangers as it is for him to have guidance in relation to outer dangers. Without parental help with his instinctual strivings, he lives in an unreal and confusing world. Standards for behavior, if they exist at all, are shifting and captious. Complete freedom of instinctual expression in a world with a population of more than one is impossible. Transgressions against loved ones and fear of the loss of their love is an ever present danger to the child who is at the mercy of his instincts. Such a child may try to bring order out of chaos by manifesting increasingly provocative behavior in order to force his parents to set limits for him. Anxiety increases as the child waits for the inevitable parental

reaction. The parent who does not, by the help of his mature love and understanding, lend his sorely needed guidance to the child struggling in such a turmoil is not permissive but negligent.

A child must be prepared to live harmoniously with reality. This necessitates the ability to renounce immediate gratification and to learn to wait. Renunciation and waiting are extremely difficult for a small child. These capacities are only attained as the child develops increasing emotional maturity. Unless he is helped by the adults close to him, he will be poorly prepared to withstand the inevitable frustrations that life will bring to him. Mastering of impulses rather than complete freedom of expression, good government rather than anarchy, should be a goal in child rearing.

The desire for self-mastery

A small child is more than a bundle of impulses striving for gratification. A constant pressing toward control of behavior is an essential and inherent part of development and maturation. Direction is given to this desire for mastery and inner control by the child's desire to please his parents, to gain their approval, and to emulate them. These are important factors making it possible for a child to modify the aims of instinctual expression in the direction of behavior that is more socially acceptable and adequate in relation to the child's age. He will sacrifice his immediate gratification to secure the even more urgently needed affection. But his efforts can only be of avail if he knows what it is that his parents want. Only by their maintaining consistent standards can they give him this knowledge. It is essential to help the child to master his impulses so that he can live harmoniously with his environment and develop a healthy character structure. "Total permissiveness" is akin to neglect and is a harbinger of future disorder.

On the other hand, the unhappy results of repressive training are well known. Inflexible and harsh censorship of the child's behavior only creates lasting fears, loss of

creativity, and lowered self-esteem. Must we choose between constant, frustrating prohibition or unqualified indulgence as a method of raising our children? An answer lies in the true meaning of the word "permissiveness."

Webster defines "permissiveness" as: "granting leave or liberty." The definition clearly denotes *activity* and not passivity or acquiescence. To be permissive is an *active* response of the parent to the needs of his child. These needs are ever changing. This has an important implication that the *granting* of permission is selective and that the things to be permitted vary with the child's needs at various stages of his development. It is not a blanket sanctioning. Behavior that is acceptable at one time may not be acceptable at another time. Sanctions should depend on many variables, not the least of which should be the impact of the child's behavior on members of the family and others in his environment.

Today it is difficult to be truly permissive

in the the best sense, which means not only helping the child to be a smoothly functioning member of society, but also making it possible for him to attain individuality and to be proud of being uniquely himself. Individual uniqueness need not be one-sided development, but should be the result of integrated strivings to achieve the best possible utilization of all gifts. To be "different" in these times, however, is to be regarded with suspicion. Not sharing the views, standards, ideals, behavior, and even prejudices and vices of the majority, may bring criticism and unpopularity. "Average" is a term of praise; and to be "popular" is to be a member of the élite. A child who expresses ideas or standards that vary from those of most of his fellows is in danger of being branded "different." But such a child will not suffer if the assets which help him live harmoniously in his environment have been developed along with those which are his distinctive traits.

There is great pressure from media of

CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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communication and advertising for the child to develop a sameness. He is bombarded with assurance that everybody who is anybody eats the same cereal, uses the same hair oil, chews the same gum, and thinks the same thoughts. Such pressure may also come from the parents themselves.

A mother recently fretted that her ten-year-old girl was a "thinker," that she "read books and didn't care for TV." A genuine interest in classical music may similarly be looked upon as a sign of maladaptation. Even delinquency is sanctioned by some if it meets the test of "doing what the others do." The father of a nine-year-old boy worried because his son did not use four letter words. He said, "I figured something was wrong. All boys use such words. I did myself when I was nine."

The pressure to be popular

In the laudable efforts of some schools to stress the need for development of the total personality, and to acknowledge that intellectual growth without emotional and social maturing is not enough, the emphasis on social adjustment has sometimes been carried to extremes. Such schools concern themselves more with the child's play with his peers and his personal popularity than with the level of his school work. Likewise, parents may make a child feel more guilty about lack of popularity than about violations of ethical and moral standards.

Parents themselves are caught today in the trap of wanting to be "regular" and well

liked. The pressures upon them are no less intense than those mentioned above for the child. They, too, must not only be well liked by their contemporaries but by their children. In an effort to be well liked they may fear to instruct their children according to their real beliefs lest they be unpopular and considered old-fashioned or compared disadvantageously with other parents.

For a child to realize his best potentialities, he needs models with sharply defined standards and ideals who have the courage to assert that which they believe and the humility not to demand that the child fashion himself in their image. A parent cannot be permissive in a positive sense unless he has accepted with toleration his own limitations, realized with pride his own unique assets, and has done his best to modify in his own life those kinds of behavior which make for disharmony.

UNICEF greeting cards

Again this year the United Nations Children's Fund is offering a set of the delightful greeting cards which have become so popular for Christmas and other occasions. This year's cards, designed by Roger Duvoisin, illustrate the theme *Joy of the World's Children* and carry holiday greetings in the five official UN languages. They are currently available from the UNICEF Greeting Card Fund, United Nations, New York, at \$1.00 per box of ten—two each of the five designs.

AEA conference

The Fourth National Conference of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. will be held November 7-9, 1954, at the Hotel Morrison, in Chicago, on the theme: *Adult Education for a Free Society*. Of this meeting the AEA says, "in the past, AEA. Conferences have focused largely on problems facing this organization. The 1954 Conference, however, will have a much broader focus. It is designed to make an impact on the whole adult education movement. The message of the conference will be addressed not only to members of the AEA, but also to all others engaged in adult education activities and to the American public." The Council of National Organizations, with which the Child Study Association is affiliated, will have its annual meeting at the same time.

HAVE YOU PLANNED YOUR UN WEEK PROGRAM?

October 17-24, 1954

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345 East 46th St., New York 17,

United States Committee for U.N. Day
816 21st St., N.W., Washington 6,

The Church Peace Union
170 East 64th St., New York 21

Permissiveness and the baby:

how does it work out in problems of

feeding

toilet training

sleeping?

New studies reveal that techniques which are effective in handling some aspects of the infant's growth, fail when applied to others

By Gertrude Goller

The three young mothers sat on their usual bench in the park watching their children play. In the two and a half years of meeting there almost daily, they had come to know each other fairly well. The summer was almost over, and Mrs. S was talking eagerly of her plans to have three-year-old Ruthie start nursery school in the fall. She was afraid, though, that Ruth might insist on taking her bottle to school once she knew there were nap periods; she certainly would never sleep without it! Mrs. H said that she couldn't even think of sending Jimmie to nursery school; they wouldn't take him because he still wet his pants. The conversation about their children continued in its accustomed groove and ended, too, in its usual way—with each in turn saying to Mrs. L, "You're our success story. But it's so hard to understand—after all, we've all been easy-going with our children." And there was Mrs. L's usual reply: "But I say 'no,' too, and David knows I expect him to do things he's able to."

The bewilderment of her companions is

not to be wondered at. Each started her baby on a self-demand feeding schedule, and became thoroughly imbued with the doctrine of permissiveness advocated in recent years by child care specialists. In some instances it seemed to work, in others it didn't. And then she was faced with the question of "But why?"

What is meant by permissiveness in child rearing? What are the origins of this concept? How does a parent apply it, and when? Does it harm a child if his parents are not permissive?

Like so many concepts in child rearing, that of permissiveness was formulated on the basis of observation and experimentation by people in the various fields of child psychology. Until about thirty years ago, few people questioned that children should be taught as early as possible to conform to the expectations of the adult world, since this was the society in which they ultimately would have to live. "Habit-training" was the key word. Pediatricians advised mothers to establish set routines for their chil-

dren early, particularly in regard to physical care. It was felt that the adult's knowledge of what was important, rather than the child's demands, should determine how the child was to be handled. Rocking, walking the floor with a colicky baby, altering feeding time if the baby cried—all these were considered detrimental to the child's physical and emotional well-being. A great burden of responsibility was placed on parents to see that their children's "habits" were established through gentle, firm consistency and insistence on routines.

The limitations of habit-training

Even as the era of habit-training was in vogue, professional people in the child care field were beginning to apply some of the concepts from psychoanalysts and from research about human development. It was recognized that children can be expected to behave and conform only according to their level of development and not at an adult level. Observing the child and then responding to what he seemed to require was advocated. The child's "demands" and "needs" were seen by some people as being synonymous, and the advice that parents should try to meet these "needs" was interpreted as a ban on any attempts to require conformity to adult standards. Some parents, seeing for the first time the limitations of set schedules, began to feel that they should permit children to have everything as they wished, short of things that would harm them physically.

Admittedly, this is a presentation of the extremes, but some parents did follow the new dictum literally. This is not said critically. For many years now, young parents have felt confused and unsure about child care practices. They earnestly want to give their children the care that will be best for them. But even within one generation the advice of the child care specialists has changed—as things must change if progress is to be made. As a result, young parents are doubtful about following their parents' now outmoded ways, but are nevertheless unsure about trusting their own impulses

in doing things differently.

It is important to recognize that workers in the fields of education and child psychology have not intended to confuse parents. As they have learned more about personality development from observations of and work with children, they have tried to find ways of fostering the development of healthy personalities. They have recognized that to this end it is important to satisfy children's *needs*—a term used here to designate those things *necessary* to maintain a child's physical and psychological equilibrium. (What the child "wants" at any given moment may not coincide with these real, basic needs.¹) Their *tentative* conclusions have been reported at scientific meetings and in journals. As inevitably happens with new findings, in each era some people jumped on the bandwagon too wholeheartedly and applied these suggestions on child care indiscriminately—and often with unhappy results for both parents and children. This does not mean that the "experts" should not be trusted. It does mean, though, that all "revolutionary" recommendations on child care have to be tested carefully and with discrimination before they are put into widespread use.

What has happened with the concept of permissiveness illustrates this point well. On the basis of the sound thesis that it is important that children's needs be met and that they have room for self-expression, parents and others working with children acted as though every demand and impulse indicated that a real need was there and, therefore, it should not be thwarted. Many could tolerate this state of affairs while their children were little, but when three- and four-year olds continued to cling to their bottles, were not toilet trained and displayed unbridled aggression, some parents could no longer conceal their dismay at the state of affairs. Bit by bit those who

¹ For full discussion of "needs" as compared with "wishes" see Katherine M. Wolf's *The Controversial Problem of Discipline*, published by the Child Study Association of America, 1953. Available from CSAA, 132 East 74th St., N. Y. C., 30¢ per copy.

had misinterpreted and over-applied "self-demand" and "permissiveness" realized that children who were not helped to behave as maturely as they could at their particular level of understanding and development did not seem to be any happier than the over-controlled child. And they certainly were not particularly enjoyable children for their peers or their parents to be with.

The question then became, "Where should parents be permissive with their

young children, and for how long?" To those who had supposed permissiveness to be the whole answer, this question in itself seemed revolutionary, for it indicated that a technique helpful in one aspect of child care might be harmful in another. Observation and experience of child behavior in relation to maternal child care practices, combined with great volumes of data on child development, have shown this to be true. But this does not mean that parents

CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA 1955 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Monday, March 28, 1955

Hotel Astor, New York City

Living and Growing with our Children:

The Emotional Impact on Parents of Typical Growth Phases of Childhood

Morning Session

EFFECT ON PARENTS OF:

The Years of Dependence: Infancy and Early Childhood

Katherine M. Wolf, Ph.D., Yale University

The Years of Discovery: The School Years

Helen Ross, Director, Institute for Psychoanalysis, Chicago

Common Problems of Sickness and Growth

Milton J. E. Senn, M.D., Yale University

Luncheon Session

PARENTS' IDEALS IN A WORLD OF MASS VALUES:

How far should they resist, how far accept and adjust to degrading influences in today's life?

What are the other courses?

Mrs. Douglas Horton, President, National Social Welfare Assembly,
and **Sol Ginsburg, M.D.**, Psychiatrist, New York City

Afternoon Session

EFFECT ON PARENTS OF:

Teenage Struggles: The Urge for Independence

Martin Stein, M.D., Psychiatrist, New York City

Problems of Late Adolescence: Steps Toward Adulthood

Speaker to be announced

must simply flounder from one experiment to another in the application of permissiveness, for the results of study and research do provide guideposts.

During the child's first three years, there are likely to be three major areas in which parents have some questions about child care practices: eating, sleeping and toilet training. How does a permissive approach work in relation to these three matters?

"Self-demand" feeding

As generally interpreted, permissiveness means allowing the child to act without interference or censure from the parents. It implies, also, some degree of adult approval, since if a child repeats actions which meet with no reproof or interference he is likely to assume they are approved. In regard to eating, this has been interpreted as feeding the infant on a "self-demand" rather than on a pre-established schedule. This is based on the premise that each child has a different physiological makeup; he therefore will differ from the next in his food needs both as to amount and frequency. A feeding schedule set up around his unique needs will be better for his physiological and psychological welfare; he is fed when he needs to be and is not forced to endure the unnecessary frustration of hunger pangs or the unpleasant experience of attempted forced feeding when he is not hungry. If, while receiving the bottle or breast, he is held tenderly, his first experiences with what he receives from the outside world give him a sense of security and comfort.

The difficulty that has been created for some young parents is in knowing *how* to follow this procedure. They are eager to keep their babies comfortable and happy. The discerning ones soon realize, however, that if the baby cries frequently he cannot possibly be hungry *every* time. And then the worrisome question is, "What *does* he need—or want?" There are other things besides hunger that make a baby cry: a skin irritation, tiredness, an air bubble. If a baby is one who cries frequently and can-

not be made comfortable, the doctor should be consulted. And there are some babies who rarely cry, who in their first few weeks somehow won't complain even if they physiologically require food. Their mothers have to be particularly perceptive in learning to recognize signs of restlessness or tension that are relieved primarily by food.

What has now been arrived at in regard to "self-demand" eating is that it is important that the baby be fed on a flexible schedule that is established by his particular rhythm and needs. Further, it has been found, by careful experimentation, that very early in life the healthy baby can indicate by his responses the amount of food that he needs. If the child is one who doesn't seem to show hunger signs, then the mother can follow a schedule suggested by the doctor, adjusting it according to how the baby responds. Mothers are advised that, in general, they can accept the baby's reactions and health as a gauge, rather than using the quantity he eats as a measure. It has been found, too, that if new foods are introduced slowly, if acceptable foods of equal nutritional value are found for foods the baby continues to dislike, and if he is permitted to help feed himself when he is interested, one is likely to have a child who enjoys his food and eats enough in quantity and variety to be well-nourished.

But it doesn't work with sleeping

It might well seem that if parents can follow the healthy child's lead in regard to his eating, they should also be able to do so in all other matters. Yet this is not true in regard to sleep, where the permissive parent has very often run into difficulty. The child finds that food relieves the feeling of discomfort when he is hungry—the reaction follows immediately and is plainly satisfying. A little child is not likely to comprehend, however, that sleep offers satisfaction, too — that it was sleep which helped him recover from a restlessness and irritability which he does not even remember having felt. With sleep, as with eating, each baby has his own requirements, and

his own cycle of wakefulness and sleepiness. But it has been demonstrated that *within this individual rhythm and need* it is important that the child be conditioned to sleep routines from an early age. Thus, if a child plainly shows that he does not need the conventional number of hours sleep at night and naptime, this must be accepted; but within this framework, the hours for bed and nap should be kept regular and not left to the child's varying inclination from day to day or night to night. It takes somewhat longer to establish a sleep schedule for some children than for others, but a regular schedule should be the ultimate goal.

The reasons that it does not work to have the young child determine his sleep schedule, once his need and rhythm have been determined, can perhaps be understood if we look at the child. For one thing, as stated before, it is rare for a young child to relate feeling tired to needing sleep (in order to overcome fatigue). Secondly, as Dr. Wolf suggests,² there seems to be psychological logic in the child's seeking food when hungry, yet not seeking sleep when tired. "Hunger is removed by getting something; tiredness by giving up something." Thirdly—and, in terms of human psychology, more important—as the infant reaches the toddler stage and becomes increasingly active he is able to explore and discover more and more in his surroundings. He finds his expanded world increasingly alluring and exciting. He can hardly be expected to leave it willingly by going to sleep. It is during the course of the child's second year, when these new discoveries are at a peak in his young life, that he is likely to protest violently against sleep even though he is obviously tired to the point of exhaustion.

For many children, extreme exhaustion increases tension and lessens the probability of quick, relaxed falling asleep. For these reasons, the regulation of a child's schedule has to come from the outside. If

the child can constantly get his parents to postpone his sleep-time, thereby postponing, too, giving up his activities and their company, he is likely to try this all the time. Since he needs the sleep, and since he can return to his activities another time, this postponement is not helpful to him. The more consistent the adult's expectation in regard to sleep, the more likely is it to meet with positive responses from the child. It is easiest for the child to surrender to sleep if it happens regularly in relation to his other activities.

Toilet training is another story

Yet, when it comes to toilet training, it is again the permissive parent who is likely to have an easier time and a more relaxed child than is the restricting one—at least during the child's first year-and-a-half. We rarely hear now of children whose toilet training is attempted in the earliest months. By and large, parents have come to accept the fact that it is not good for a baby to be propped on a toilet seat or potty chair before his back muscles are strong enough to support him. On the other hand, the ability to sit up plus regularity in elimination have at times been taken as the signs of readiness for toilet training. There is little question that the combination of an alert and persistent mother and a "regular" baby have at times resulted in clean diapers by the time a baby is nine or ten months old. On the other hand, there is evidence that this

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² op cit., page 23.

early training is not as likely to be maintained as that which is begun at a later age.

The parent who is more permissive about soiling and wetting has generally had more success with toilet training. The child does not *need* toilet training in the same way that he does food and sleep. On the other hand, he does need his mother's approval, and by the age of *about* eighteen months is at a stage where he enjoys pleasing her. Also, he not only is likely to have sphincter control, but can walk well enough so that he can at least participate actively in going to the toilet. In other words, for toilet training the idea of permissiveness takes on a new dimension. It is not just a matter of allowing the child to do as he pleases, at least for a while, in regard to his bodily functions, but also of waiting until he is able to understand and master a situation physically, intellectually and emotionally before expecting him to alter his behavior.

Yet, to the understandable distress of some parents, there can be such a thing as over-permissiveness even in regard to toilet training, where so much has been said to urge that the child should not be pushed. Some adults have interpreted permissiveness in toilet training as meaning that the parent should never suggest to the child that he might try using the toilet. They hope that the child will ask to do so of his own accord. Some little children have been known to do so after observation of their parents' use of the toilet, which has given them some idea of what a toilet is for. Others have gotten the idea from their playmates, although this is not likely to occur before the age of three.

Stages of readiness

There are, on the other hand, stages of lesser or greater readiness, and it is wise to avoid the former and take advantage of the latter when they can be detected. For example, it is usual for children to reach, at about two years of age, a period of strong self-assertiveness and negativism. They are therefore likely to be more balky if toilet training is first introduced at this time. In

many families this is the time when another child is born. Here, too, a young child is unlikely to be cooperative in trying to become more grownup when he sees the new infant having all its physical needs taken care of by the mother.

There is certainly no *one* time for toilet training. As in all steps in growing up, each child is ready at a different time. The child of about eighteen months is generally at a stage, however, where he is likely to have typical, discernible signs of being ready for a bowel movement, can understand why he is being placed on the toilet and is responsive to praise for his accomplishments. Whether at eighteen months, fifteen months or twenty-two months—the important thing is that the mother's permissiveness not be so great that she ignores the child's readiness to take the next step in growing up.

Three major concerns

If we review briefly the three areas of major concern to many parents in regard to handling the young child, what seems to hold is that permissiveness fosters healthy development when used for feeding and toilet training but not for sleeping. Observations of the child's behavior and awareness of his psychological, as well as physical, level and requirements can give some clues to why this is so. Most children experience hunger as discomfort, indicate this feeling in some way and will eat with greatest interest when hungry and given foods in the amounts and kinds they find palatable. If the child is given food in relation to his needs, he enjoys not only what is good for him but has another channel for finding out that his mother is associated with an important and pleasurable experience.

With sleeping, on the other hand, not only is the young child unaware that sleep will relieve his fatigue-caused restlessness or crankiness, but going to sleep means surrendering what is pleasurable and getting nothing discernible in return. Therefore, the parent has to decide when the child is

to go to bed, in accordance with his observation of the child's rest and sleep requirements.

To most young children toilet training has little meaning. There are a few who complain about wearing soiled diapers and thereby, in a sense, seem to prefer being helped to use the toilet. Most children are unconcerned, however, about soiled or wet diapers that are changed with normal frequency, and are not likely to ask to be trained on their own initiative. Since toilet training is something the parent is asking of the child, it is important that this request not be made before there is the possibility that the child is capable of responding physically, intellectually and emotionally. Here, then, we have an area of child care where a permissive attitude helps the child up to a certain point. And yet, when the child is ready, it is important that the par-

ent, although still permissive in the sense of not pushing for accomplishment, help the child start to learn one of the things that will ultimately be expected of him.

The real uses of permissiveness

In using the concept of permissiveness, therefore, we are coming more and more to realize that this is not a philosophy, a mode of life or a command from on high. It is a technique and attitude that can help a child develop if it is used at the appropriate time and in the appropriate situation. Where overall and indiscriminate use of the idea as a "rule" led many parents to disillusionment and a strong counter-reaction, a more selective approach is likely to demonstrate the real worth and usefulness of permissiveness in child rearing.

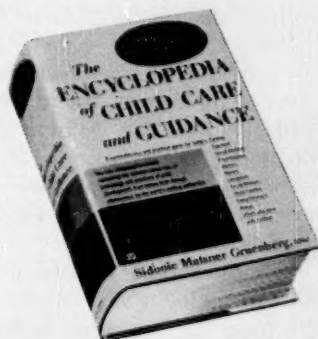
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How much freedom for the pre-school child?

By Mary Frank and Lawrence K. Frank

Permissiveness implies freedom to grow. But
wholesome growth includes learning to
cope with limits and frustration

Permissiveness is a word which now evokes from some parents bitterness or even anger. Usually these are parents whose older children are now of high school or college age, and who tried, at home and with their schools, to raise children in a new way, with a new freedom, without harsh punishment or deprivations.

From a parent's-eye view, let's look at the way in which "permissiveness" was applied to the care of young children, what valuable experience we have gained in the past ten or twenty years which leads us to refine and enlarge the theory of permissiveness and to use a new and better word if necessary.

Permissiveness involves a philosophy of child discipline. (Obviously, if problems in discipline did not arise in families there would be slight need for all the hubbub about permissiveness — or any other school of thought on child rearing.) Again, permissiveness is derived from *permitting*, or *allowing*. Permitting what? In general, permitting the child to grow with as little interference as possible; and this in turn means letting the child do something — sometimes something you would rather he didn't do.

So we get back to the crux of the matter:

children (especially little children) do things which cause adult dismay. These things may be annoying *right now*: noisy, dirty, harmful; or disturbing to parents because, if continued in the future, they may hurt not only the child himself but other people with whom he plays and works. He is ungenerous, let us say, or he says, "No, I don't want to," or he won't eat or sleep; he may take what doesn't belong to him or tell his Daddy he hates him, and hates (and hurts) the baby, too! He tears the book, messes with his food, and kicks his sainted aunt.

Permit all of this? Why? Breathes there a parent who is (was) not either embarrassed, or shocked or just plain "wore out" with such anti-social behavior? Permit all of this — and then pretend it doesn't make one whit of difference to you, or at least say "No" with indifferent, cool voice? This was the interpretation which many parents put on the word "permissiveness" some ten or fifteen years ago. And in the parent's favor, let us say that in many cases they had been advised to act in this fashion either by specialists who were over-enthusiastic about the merits of this new concept or by other parents who had gone all out for what they thought permissiveness meant.

There is always the parent's very human, very worthy love for his child, and his (or her) dream for happiness, for peaceful living, for the well-being of his child now and in the future. And in our day the doctors, psychologists, educators who study the child as he grows into man, who observe his behavior, who see the unhappy or sick person, the "normal," abnormal or unusual person, suggested a new way of working toward these ends.

Parents listened to and read the words of these men as the best advice for rearing children and for avoiding problems of unhappiness and maladjustment which other children had faced in maturity. This, in itself, was a departure from the tradition of the ages. Parents now felt that it was possible to help the child become a happy, good human being. Earlier, most people believed that a man's "badness" or "goodness" was part of his personal equipment at birth and that the former could only be suppressed and the latter encouraged by rigid training.

What parents learned

Parents learned from the psychiatrist of the profound human misery for a man himself and for his social group when his childish behavior had been subject to frequent punishment and shaming. They discovered that his parents' words of ridicule or harsh blame not only did not help him to develop as a happy human being, but actually fixed feelings of guilt for childish acts deep within him so that they persisted into adult life to make him an unsettled, and maybe harmful, adult. Over and over again, psychiatrists have documented such findings with histories of adults whose own lives and those of their husbands, wives and children were soured by the bitterness of bottled-up rage, or guilt, or anxiety—which were childish reactions to long-ago deep hurts from a parent or other guardian.

Pediatricians who worked with young children with disturbances of various kinds — tics, enuresis, lack of appetite — demonstrated that any child may develop anxiety

from time to time when he feels that his parents do not love him or that he is "all bad."

Nursery school teachers, watching the children who continually bit or bullied, who were the disturbing ones in every game, who were tense and fearful, found that very often such children did not feel a parent's acceptance of them *as children*, and were bothered by something they did not understand.

Then again, the scientist who studied the growth and development of children discovered that many bits of what we might call "misbehavior" were *normal behavior* at a certain stage of growth. Mothers instinctively act on this assumption when they put the breakable bric-a-brac out of a baby's reach at the age when he starts to pull himself up to a standing position via the coffee table. But they had not always seen that it was equally true of other kinds of behavior at other stages of the child's growth.

However, there are as many steps in psychological development as there are in physical development. The study of the little child is a new science, but those psychologists and educators who had taken copious notes on large numbers of children realized, for example, that little children are rarely generous, that they *do* strike out without control at other children when they have no realization of what the blow feels like to the other child. Small children throw blocks as readily as balls because they are curious about the world, with impulses to move, climb, throw, taste, touch, pull apart. This curiosity and human vitality are good; they are the stuff of which human achievements are made. They are the child's first steps in learning balance, control, in learning to build up and put together what he knows.

Even when a child finds out that a blow hurts, that balls are for throwing and blocks for building, he is apt still to hit or throw the hard object. Control is a slowly-learned business, and the little child is seldom able in one week, or one month to think before he leaps, to withhold rage, or tears (or, for

that matter, to moderate excitement or exuberance).

An over-strict or too-punishing parent may, by trying to weed out misbehavior thoroughly, dampen a child's capacity for living and learning and make learning a painful, distasteful thing. It is possible to emphasize the "badness" of the child to the point where he has little conception of the possibilities in him for doing good, being generous, sharing, for making discoveries of his own, for being a responsible human being. (An over-protective parent may frighten a child, too, in her ever anxious solicitude for his health or welfare.)

Along with these new findings of research in child development, our "permissive" parent saw a new kind of education developing, especially for the child of nursery school age. Here parents found children experimenting with blocks, paints, clay, learning with these materials, learning to share, to build, to create stories or pictures of their own which were rich in imagination and in the child's own observations about the world. Educators in these schools said, in effect, "Every child has within him potentialities for some degree of creativity if he is given a chance to work without adult criticism, to move around, to use materials, to talk as a child talks without the limitations of fear of what adults will say."

Humanitarian parents

Now, these ideas are still valid. The concepts we have described in brief were taken over by some parents (and a few educators) as a guide for freer child rearing: allow the child to talk out, act out, play out his feelings; don't frustrate or inhibit, don't repress or suppress. Do not misunderstand — these parents were not unintelligent, or uncaring or thoughtless. Like parents in every generation they looked to the wisdom of their day for guidance. Furthermore, these parents were humanitarians. They could not accept the ideas of harshness and punishment as the basis for a happy family life — for, again, like every new generation they set out to correct the

mistakes and unhappiness of the previous generation. So, in many families and some schools, children were permitted to act out their "needs" (as they were called), their desires or their feelings.

What we forgot

However, we had all forgotten that one little child does not exist in a vacuum, that he depends on the adult world for some cues to acceptable behavior. In taking off all controls we forgot that the little child needs patient help in learning control. We forgot that children need to feel that adults are their staunch supporters; that *someone* must represent order to the child when his own feelings are in a state of chaos or bewilderment.

We forgot (as the anthropologist points out) that children grow up in a culture, here or in a primitive tribe, where adult men and women behave in a certain way, accept some practices and reject others.

Even a little child takes his cues from adults, imitating them, wanting to be accepted by them, wanting to grow up and be like them. The fine network of human relations in a family, the give and take, the good humor which follows the bad, the plans, parties, ways of expressing love as well as anger — all these give the little child his culture. One little child's own isolated angry explosions, tantrums, destructive deeds or mistakes cannot give him a picture of himself or of others that offers him confidence in himself or in his world.

We forgot to remind ourselves that parents are not nursery school teachers (as teachers are not parents), that home is not a nursery school, but a place where there are adult needs as well as child needs which have to be fitted in. Incidentally, we forgot father; we left him hanging on a limb, looking at this child of his with bewilderment, not sure whether he knew (or liked) his child, wondering about his place in the modern family.

We still need parents who can permit the shriek, or the slap or the bedtime "bawls" without feeling that shrieks or

howls will be part of Johnny's permanent, grownup equipment. But we also need parents who can go beyond "letting him alone" and can ease the tired, or angry or disturbed child with words of their own, offering the child a "bridge" for coping with the disturbing situation, such as, "I know you feel mean now, we all do sometimes. But you'll feel better after a while" (with the full conviction that he will).

We need parents who can accept (and respect) the child's wish *not* to share his tricycle at two, and adults who know that, a year or two later, generosity will be more evident — if adults themselves are generous, too, and help him share from time to time. Now we know there is nothing wrong with the suggestion, from a parent, that "perhaps next time" Bobby can have a ride or that a child might offer his potato chips to a friend.

We have come, also, to accept certain things about ourselves as parents. We do get angry at certain acts; we *are not* automatons who simply say, in a monotone, "Time to stop slapping now." We realize it is not helpful to anybody for us to pretend otherwise, since little children have their own sensitive psychological antennae; they know how we feel and what we want, even when we cloak our feelings in spun sugar.

We have learned that, to be parents, we have to be adults. Often we have to make decisions for our children; our closeness to the child gives us cues to the kind of person he is so that we can learn the signals when he is tired or hungry, and put him to bed or make allowances for his hunger pains.

We have learned that being adult means just that. Constant, unbridled anger is frightening and damaging; it is childish and threatens a child because it betokens disorder to him as much as does a complete absence of feeling in us. But we also realize that we can take a little child's anger, or destructiveness, as *childish*, not as a pattern for life in the home nor as a threat to our status.

And over the years we have begun to see that some frustrations are inevitable in

every child's life, and must even, at times, be imposed by parents; it is the picture of himself and his capacities which he gets from us that is important. The absence of problems, in itself, is no sign of a person's mental health. What you do about a situation, how you face it, how you feel about it is what makes each person happy or unhappy. If we continually stop the child's attempts to play or explore, in the interest of cleanliness, or quiet or order, he may lose the necessary spark for learning which he will need throughout life. But if he loses his trust in our adult strength, generosity, fairness, then he also loses trust in his own humanity. Our closeness, our constancy, our regard for his make-up and way of doing things are the ways in which we show our respect for him and his needs.

Total permissiveness is frightening

We have learned that total permissiveness is frightening to a child: he gets too much of himself and not enough of adult stability! And, in school situations, total permissiveness may leave a child at the mercy of the impulses of others as well as his own (which is actually why we have rules and laws in adult living).

The little child's self-image is dependent on a day-to-day continuum of feeling he gets from us: our confidence in his next step despite the first fall; our trust that the spoon will someday reach the mouth; our sureness that tomorrow and the day after there will be things to do that will be happy and absorbing; our acceptance of occasional sand on the rug, mud in the mouth or blows on the playground. We also must really believe that he *can* grow up, that there are many positive alternatives for acts that may be destructive; and we can show him those alternatives — constantly stopping a child from pouring water on the rug, or spanking a two-year-old for breaking the china are not enough. He *can* pour water in the sink, or help mop the floor, or use tin bowls for his sand box.

The child who plays in disorderly fashion, constantly testing limits, and running

"wild" as we say, may be the child who is continually blocked from going ahead by punishments or harsh words, or he may be the one who has had no restraints and no help in finding channels for work and play. Or he may be simply a very healthy child who goes on a "binge" for a while, as any child may do. There are periods when the happiest child becomes a screamer, or a messer or a night owl, and comes out of it in a month or so.

Finally, we realize now that the all-permissive parent of a few years ago confused herself and her spouse as much as she did the child. She was disturbed when she found herself disliking her child at times. Also, she found herself a bit frightened of her own child — fearful that suppressing his tantrum at the dinner table might damage his love for her. Occasionally (and justifiably) she vented her stored-up wrath on the child all at once, and then felt guilty for being a "bad" mother.

With ten or fifteen years' experience, she has discovered that parents, in a position as authorities and heads of families (like authorities in school or in government), are inevitably targets for momentary resentment or hostility. She can now accept the resentment as well as the love, giving the child the feeling that she knows he dislikes some things she does, but also knows he needs her like no one else on earth.

Discipline through belief

We have come closer to adulthood in our thinking about discipline. We don't have to say, "He won't get the better of me," because we realize that a child's power is tenuous and hesitating; his thunder and shouting are attempts to cope with helplessness, and not reflections of omnipotence. Nor do we have to be afraid of interrupting the thunder when it is desirable for family peace and the child's own good.

Permissiveness was one step in our tradition of belief in the worth of human beings, and especially the worth of children. It was the beginning of a discipline and education which tried to foster a richer,

kinder, more peaceful individual. It was an attempt to help children grow without the hostility of anxiety that can make uneasy, resentful, destructive adults in marriage or in community living.

Permissiveness did not take into account a child's fright when he does not find an adult close to him who believes in law and order, and who helps create law and order when he cannot do it. Actually, total permissiveness created straw-man parents and teachers who were no protection against the threat of helplessness a child feels at times.

Parents: neither bosses nor puppets

Today, we are also more human toward ourselves as parents. We accept the theory that mistakes may occur with children, and that they are not necessarily fatal. We begin to feel that maybe our love is as powerful as our angry moments; that is *not* rejecting a child to be cross, or irritated occasionally, that we trust the little child only when we trust ourselves and other human beings.

Today we try to be neither authoritarian bosses, nor shadowy, unreal, colorless parents. We try rather to be helpers, resources, protecting parents for our children, learning to see each child as a special one who may need a different kind of help, or protection, and learning to correct mistakes when we see that children become over-anxious or tense.

Lastly, we realize that we cannot solve the problems of a child's life by a theory of complete permissiveness. Every child will have various problems as he grows up into a new stage of understanding, and as he is faced with new situations. We can help him learn to find ways of doing things that are satisfying; we can give him a happy picture of human relationships; we can encourage him to go forward after an upset, and show him that it is possible to "blow away" the ghosts of past misdeeds with a memory of "no harm done." But we cannot avoid problems for our children by abdicating as parents.

The attack on our schools: a crisis in American faith

By Ernest O. Melby

Sweeping criticism of our schools' basic goals
is part of a larger retreat from
our traditional faith in the individual

The last ten years have been characterized by unprecedented negative criticisms of education. According to many of the critics our schools fail to teach the Three R's and fail to discipline the pupils. Others charge the schools with being anti-religious and even subversive. Not infrequently one or perhaps all of the charges are laid at the door of progressive education. Progressive education seems indeed to have become a convenient whipping boy. Admittedly many of the charges are loose and unproved, such as the claim that the wave of juvenile delinquency is due to progressive education. The causes of juvenile delinquency are, of course, very complex and there is wide disagreement surrounding the problem. Of one thing we can be sure—the current discussion of progressive education has been highly confusing to the public, so much so that unless the issues are clarified soon public attitudes may become such as to set back educational progress by decades.

From within the educational profession itself we have not always been successful in helping the public to fuller understanding. In considerable part this failure stems from another—that of not discriminating carefully among the critics and the criticisms and especially a failure to see the whole problem in perspective. Too often friends of the schools have seen only the specific attacks. For example, if someone says we fail to discipline the children, the educational spokesman merely submits evi-

dence to the contrary. But not often have we asked what produces the attacks or what is the backdrop of public opinion in which they occur. This brief article attempts to appraise the attack on progressive education in the light of the present state of the public mind and tries to indicate in general how it can be met by educators and laymen.

It is becoming increasingly plain that attacks on public education and progressive education are merely phases of a general loss of faith in freedom by many people in our country. Education, particularly public education, and in a very special way progressive education, is a manifestation of the great American faith. This great faith was in the first 150 years of our history so much a part of us and our life that we seldom gave special attention to it. Thus on the Statute of Liberty, the poem by Emma Lazarus says:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tossed to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

This was written when our faith in ourselves, in freedom and in the stability of our institutions was largely unshaken. We did not fear subversion by our immigrants—we were sure we could make good Ameri-

cans of them and we did. Ours was then an open society. Education was a fruit of this faith. Public education free to all our children would, so we thought, undergird it. We had faith that if people had a chance to be educated they would be good citizens and good Americans.

Made for America

Progressive education was especially adapted to American concepts of life. Here an effort was made to build an education in the mold of the meaning of America. Did not America mean opportunity? Then should not educational opportunity be given to every child regardless of his economic status or the character of his interests? Did not America mean faith in people? Then should not the teacher and the school proceed on faith in the child? America meant respect for the sacredness of individual human beings, for their worth and dignity. What better place to begin than in our schools by studying children's interests and adapting education to their needs. America believed in the method of intelligence, in forming one's opinions on the basis of facts. Should not, then, the school give the pupil practice in seeking the truth? As an American citizen the pupil would be expected to practice self-discipline. Clearly the school should prepare him by giving opportunity for self-discipline. Since America was viewed as a human brotherhood, could we do otherwise than to make the school also such a brotherhood?

But educators had still other foundations for progressive education. The findings of students of human development, anthropologists, pediatricians and of behavioral science generally supported the same educational outlook. Children grow best and mature most fully and desirably in an atmosphere of security, affection and freedom. Studies of learning reached the same conclusion. We live what we learn and learn what we live, said the students of behavior. Finally the creative emphasis in American life, free enterprise, high productivity, demanded an education which stimulated

creativity, developed incentives, initiative, originality and energetic forward thrust. Progressive education was thus free enterprise applied to education; it was an education seemingly hand-tailored for a free, dynamic, creative and confident country. Such was educational thinking in the twenties and the thirties.

In the forties and fifties we find education subjected to severe attack. The permissiveness of the progressive school is held responsible for a claimed moral decadence. What has brought this sharp change in mood?

A crisis in our faith

America had, in fact, entered a crisis in faith. The great depression shook our faith in economic freedom so badly that not even ten years of postwar prosperity has completely restored it. We are not yet sure we can keep our amazingly productive economy going on an even keel without periodic wars. Two world wars destroyed our feeling of isolation and world security. The Communist threat has shaken our faith in ourselves, our values, our government and even in the practicability of our past concepts of freedom. Confidence has flown away and doubt has taken over. One of the first things we begin to doubt is freedom itself. Will not subversives take advantage of it to destroy it and is it not therefore better to put it on ice for the duration of the Communist menace? Thus we come as a people to be dominated by doubt and fear rather than by faith and confidence.

The criticisms of progressive education are thus only manifestations of our growing doubts. The attacks on the public schools are really attacks on our fundamental faith in freedom. Perhaps (some think) it really is not safe to educate all of the people—too many think dangerous thoughts. Certainly if you do educate them this education should be safeguarded by censorship of dangerous ideas, ever-present teacher control and an officially and carefully prescribed curriculum—the same for all children. Better not enter social contro-

versy—teach the Three R's, the facts of history and the necessary skills. So say, or imply, many of the critics.

This is all a part of the wave of anti-intellectualism that has spread dangerously throughout America. We are afraid of ideas. We are afraid of people who arrive at their convictions on the basis of reason and fact. Such people may reach conclusions we do not like. We are guided more by what we feel than by real thinking. A school which every day teaches pupils how to think for themselves is therefore viewed as dangerous. If each child is helped to be his own most creative self, how can we be sure what he will think?

Not too much — too little

But progressive education is in trouble not only because of anti-intellectualism but because it has been attacked in its infancy. If the American people knew the small extent to which *true* progressive education had permeated American schools they would know that to whatever extent education is to blame for our national ills it is the old and not the new education that is to blame. Too few teachers have as yet adequate faith in the pupils. Too few really respect the uniqueness of the individual child. Too few have really learned how to help the child seek the truth. Far too few have fashioned their school rooms into fine examples of human brotherhood. It would have taken several more decades to achieve a genuinely progressive education for America. What we have now is an education which about 1941 was only partially altered and which in the last decade has been so battered it cannot make up its mind whether to follow science forward or fear and doubt backward to rigidities which take no account of what science has taught us.

It is a notable thing that such critics as Lynd and Bestor seem to take no account of the facts about the human organism or human behavior. Judging by their writings one would guess they read no psychology, physical or cultural anthropology, pedi-

atrics, human development or industrial management. They seem to think they know what children should learn and seem unable to see education as a process by which the individual becomes what he is uniquely capable of becoming.

Why the lag?

Why has our education not made more rapid progress in converting itself to the new patterns? A truly progressive, modern, scientific and genuinely democratic school calls for a teacher with thorough understanding of children, real insight into the problems of a free society and skill in human relations in addition to good general education and whatever specialized subject matter preparation is required by his grade or subject area. That many teachers who sincerely tried to be "progressive" lacked such equipment is common knowledge. Their errors, however well meaning, have lived to frustrate their colleagues and to provide the means of ridicule in the hands of the critics and confusion in the mind of the public.

Nowhere is this unfinished or imperfectly performed progressive education better illustrated than in the problems relating to the degree of permissiveness. The critics make fun of a "do-as-you-please school." No responsible educator ever advocated such a school. Some ill-advised and inadequately prepared teacher may have tried to run one but more often such a school is a fiction of the imagination of critics, bent on reversing the orientation of American education and occasionally that of American life.

Permissiveness must be responsible and purposive, not fortuitous and chaotic. The wise teacher seeking to maintain a progressive school is permissive enough to give children practice in making decisions and in ordering their common life. She intervenes when she feels she must to give children practice in living democratically rather than an exhibition of chaos and irresponsibility. Such a teacher helps children to be themselves, to paint what they see,

write what they themselves think. But she does not leave them helpless in frustration. She stands by to applaud success, to soften the impact of failure and to add the missing part in a creative effort before discouraging frustration sets in.

High standards of achievement

Such a teacher has high standards of achievement. She encourages every pupil to be satisfied only with his best effort. Her school is a place permeated by hard work—her pupils are in fact learning to work hard. They are learning to think, to be original, inventive, creative, responsible and productive. Such a teacher loves children. They know it. She motivates them with her faith in them. They do not want to disappoint her, so they do their best. She does not try to make them replicas of herself but helps them to the best in terms of their own unique endowments.

We must have such a school if the American people are to escape from doubt and bring about a renaissance of faith in freedom. Developing such a school is partly a problem of teacher education, partly one of better educational leadership and partly a matter of fuller mobilization of our community resources.

In teacher education our resources are badly used. The colleges of liberal arts have ignored the role of child study and skill in human relations. Even the departments concerned with behavioral sciences, though they often had good content, failed to cast it in a context of the best human attitudes and patterns of behavior. They sent out teachers who knew subjects but not children. Even when they were majors in behavioral science they sometimes failed because, while they knew the facts of human growth, they lacked the skills in human relations. Departments in schools of education tried to remedy this situation, but sometimes sent out people impressed with the power of "goodwill" but short on scientific background. In the latter case they were often unable to defend their practices (good though they might be) since

they lacked the scientific foundation. They are also likely to lack the working method of science, the constant search for the new and the better which is basic to true education.

If really scientific and dynamically creative education is to be developed in America we must have a new teacher education. But teachers cannot be so prepared that they may be left to their own resorts for the rest of their professional lives. We must give the teachers with effective preparation equally effective and creative leadership. To do this we need a new concept of administration that uses all the resources of the community. For what we need is a community that in all of its functioning is a creative educational enterprise. Such education, like medicine and atomic science, will change as we acquire new knowledge of human beings, of society, of learning and of human growth. But since it will rest more firmly on scientific foundations it will be less vulnerable to attack from uninformed people or selfish interests.

From fog to sunlight

Perhaps we shall speak of scientific education rather than progressive education. But it must be remembered that education utilizes an adventure in creative living. We need a new word to describe modern education, one which will show its roots in science, art and creative human relations; which will avoid confusion on the one hand and give us greater forward thrust on the other. But most of all we should avoid turning our faces toward educational goals and procedures which are anti-democratic, anti-intellectual and in conflict with the broad meaning of freedom. Education must help us to come out of the fog of doubt into the sunlight of faith. If our education is to achieve this goal, both its aims and processes must be fully understood by the public. More than that, the parents, the public, must share in the process. When they really share the educational task with us they will not only understand it, but they will themselves be its beneficiaries.

Do parents get a second chance?

The child's development is a continuous and flexible process offering parents many chances to compensate for earlier "mistakes"

Parents get not only one second chance—they have many chances to modify or counteract their mistakes as parents, to bring new assets to their relationship with their children and to help their children grow. About 2500 years ago Zoroaster gave us a formula for working towards a cherished goal: "Taking the first footstep with a good thought, the second with a good word, and the third with a good deed—I entered Paradise." I believe that we can profit from Zoroaster's wisdom. By channeling our concern about our children's problems into action, by better understanding of parent-child relationships and by utilizing our knowledge and resources for help, we may not enter Paradise, but we can win our second chance.

Feelings of anxiety and self-reproach and a sense of defeat are widespread among parents today. Many mothers, especially, try conscientiously to rear their children in conformity with the new teachings, and worry because they have not known the "best" methods from the start. They entertain the myth that there is one "best" method for all problems of child rearing: if only they had known it, they would not have made errors. They long to wipe the slate clean, start afresh. They have a fantasy of perfection—a child free of conflicts and

frustration. They believe all their children's problems stem from their own mistakes, which they feel are irreparable. We can flatly state, to begin with, that these ideas are fallacious. There is no single "best" method for all children. Moreover, some conflict is an essential motivating force for the child's growth. Also, while parents cannot erase the past and start over, they can improve the quality of their relationship with their children and help them master their current problems.

Early experiences can be modified

It has long been recognized, but made more explicit by dynamic psychology, that patterns of behavior are laid down in the early years and that these patterns become integrated in the personality. We know that the earlier a disturbance in behavior patterns occurs the more widespread are its effects and the more difficult to modify and correct. In extreme cases the damage is irreparable. However, this should not be taken to mean that personality is unalterably fixed in early life. Personality development is a continuous process and can, therefore, be influenced positively or negatively throughout the growth of the child. Therein lie our many chances.

There are many reasons why behavior pat-

terns are potentially modifiable. The child is continuously growing and changing and his behavior patterns are in a state of flux, particularly in the early years. Parents, as individuals, also grow and change. Inherent in both parents and children is a strong impulse to learn to adapt to each other and to find mutual satisfaction and acceptance. As the child grows, his needs change, and his changing attitudes and demands may stimulate a different response in the parents. Further, we know that the meaning of the child to the parents also changes, and with this there are shifts in the parents' attitude to the child. Nor does the broader social environment remain static. Modifications in the environment (apart from the personality of the parent and the child) influence both, and also may result in changes in their relationship. These and other factors make possible many "spontaneous cures" and successful therapy.

Franz Alexander has pointed out that "personality development does not stop at a certain age, that significant changes take place in all phases of the life-curve, and particularly that the formative experiences of early years do not necessarily leave irreversible effects. Many of the adverse influences of early childhood can be corrected by later experiences in life."

There are factors besides parental attitudes

Because the importance of early parent-child relationships in molding the child's character and attitudes has now been established beyond question, there is a tendency among parents to feel that they alone are responsible for all developmental problems and personality disturbances in their children. Without trying to minimize the effect of the baby's first experiences with his mother, and later with his father, we should recognize also the fact that many other influences are at work. These are: the constitution of the child; critical life events; the social and cultural pressures which affect his family; and his own later life experiences.

Observations of newborn babies in the

nursery show clearly that they differ at birth in their rhythm of sleep and activity and in their motility. They also differ in their sensitivity to sound, touch, light and temperature. These differences in their physical, emotional and intellectual endowments are the baseline on which develops the ability to master the environment. At each level of development the child is confronted with characteristic and individual problems which he must learn to solve. Parents play a significant part in helping the child, but the child's own nature also influences his solutions.

His physical constitution, too, has its effects, both directly on his own reactions and indirectly through its impact on his parents' feelings. The child born with a physical defect presents an especially difficult problem because, superimposed on a realistic basis for concern, there are often parental feelings of disappointment, resentment and guilt. A baby who is weak, irritable, restless or who has nursing and digestive difficulties may be very frustrating to the mother. Her frustration and anxiety then are communicated to the child, who may respond with more irritability. This can begin a mutually unsatisfactory relationship. Or a phlegmatic baby, whose normal growth is slow, may thwart the mother who is active and energetic. The baby's behavior thus influences the parents' reaction, just as the parents' handling modifies the expression of the baby's innate tendencies. This mutual, reciprocal influence continues throughout childhood.

As the child grows, he develops his own unique patterns of behavior to get what he needs. These provoke counter-reactions in

Symposium on child development

Dr. Gunnar Dybwad, Executive Director of the Child Study Association of America, participated recently in an international symposium on child development held in Toronto, August 2-12, 1954. This preceded the 5th International Congress on Mental Health, at which Dr. Dybwad and Miss Gertrude Goller of the CSAA staff served as resource persons in parent education workshops.

the parents' feeling toward him. But this is a two-way lane that has potentialities for positive as well as negative relations between parents and child. For instance, the self-assertion of the four-year old which may threaten and challenge the parents may express itself in the school-age child in vigor of learning. This is usually a source of satisfaction to the parents, and one which brings about an improvement in their relations with the child.

Also, such things as social upheavals, wars, repeated moving from community to community, death of a parent, illness of the child, economic deprivation all leave their mark on the child's development. The parents' influence is basic, but it is not the only influence. Therefore, they should not feel that they must shoulder the total burden or blame for mishaps. Being realistic about the extent of their responsibility helps many parents to rid themselves of excessive guilt feelings, and this, in turn, gives them a more healthy and relaxed attitude toward their children. Instead of dwelling fearfully on past mistakes, they are better able to seize present opportunities. Moreover, outward action is a good balance for self-examination. It may not be any easier to change the state of the world than the state of one's own personality. But the effort to grapple with physical and social circumstances—one of the "good deeds" that Zoroaster spoke of—is a constructive part of translating the "second chance" from wish into reality.

Helpful reappraisal of child rearing concepts

Another factor which will be helpful to parents today comes in the form of a reappraisal of some concepts of child rearing. In the past, many ideas and "rules" were very rigidly held—and then abruptly discarded for almost diametrically opposite ones. But, as we learn more about these matters, we see that a rule is only as good as its application—the good sense and judgment with which it is used.

Parents undoubtedly have suffered from the shifts in recommended child rearing

practices. In the past several decades we moved from the belief that the child should be strictly disciplined and kept "in his place" to the other extreme. The child whom we began to see as an individual in his own right became the hub around which the family revolved. *Permissiveness* became the slogan in child rearing practices. Feeding practices in infancy shifted from the observance of the rigid schedule to the "self-demand" schedule; from early toilet training to great laxity in toilet training; from the strict control of aggression in children to absence of control. There was even a tendency among some parents to stimulate aggression in their children through smiling at and being fascinated by sexual and aggressive behavior, because this confirmed the theories that they had learned.

Reaction to this wholesale and indiscriminate use of permissiveness naturally set in, because it did not reduce the problems of children, nor did it improve the relationship between them and their parents. Because of this reaction, there is danger of a punitive and drastic return "back to the woodshed," and it is important to emphasize anew that the quality of parental attitudes is more important than the particular child rearing practices and techniques. Spontaneity in parental feelings should be restored. Expressions of love and acts of discipline are more genuine and effective when they come from spontaneous feelings rather than from the literal translation of the latest recommendations in child rearing. Because of our fear of making mistakes, we have inhibited our intuitive feelings about our children. In our literalness, we have lost some of the imaginativeness and humor so helpful in dealing with children. We have lost also a great part of the pleasure and satisfaction that we can get through our children. Not only have we tried to safeguard them from our own feelings, but we have also protected them from the genuine, "old-fashioned" love of grandparents.

Love involves more than meticulous application of techniques. It is respect and understanding of the child's individuality

and a deep sense of responsibility and desire for his best possible growth. Such love is a measure of the maturity and effectiveness of the parent.

Blame is a futile approach

The reproachful attitude of professional people dealing with parents has been another contributing factor to parental insecurity and anxiety. Parents, out of guilt, have taken over this attitude and applied it to themselves. We must recognize clearly that to blame parents for all their children's problems is both an over-simplification and a futile approach.

Most problems have many causes. However, no matter what the cause of the child's problems parents suffer intensely. The knowledge of professional people that the child's disturbance may serve unconscious needs in some parents should be used to help them, not to increase their anxiety and guilt. As professional people develop greater humility, and an awareness of their own limitations, the pendulum appears to be swinging in a healthier direction toward a more sympathetic understanding of parents as well as children.

The first step: awareness

When parents have an awareness that things have gone wrong, they have already taken the first step towards their second chance. The second step is an understanding of the forces that operate in parent-child relationships and of the needs of the growing child. Crucially important in the interaction between parent and child is the parent's own personality; the mother's motherliness, her capacity to love and care for the infant, influences powerfully the child's development. But motherliness is "caught" rather than taught. It grows largely out of the mother's early relationship with her parents, but it can be helped or hindered by the emotional support that the mother gets from the father, from her own mother or from other meaningful persons. The father, for instance, makes his major contribution to the baby's development in

infancy largely through his devotion and love to the mother, which replenishes her emotional reserves.

In addition to their conscious feelings and hopes for the child's development, all parents bring to parenthood unconscious attitudes and feelings. These have grown out of their own childhood relationship and cumulative experiences with their parents, siblings and other people in their environment. Thus, the best preparation for parenthood comes from having lived in a family in which parents loved each other and their children, and, by their example, set a standard of ethical and social conduct which served as the basis for the child's conscience. To the degree to which parents did not enjoy such positive relationships, did not resolve their feelings of competition and rivalry with their own parents and siblings and failed to accept comfortably their own sexual roles, they may have greater-than-average difficulties with their own children.

On the other hand, we must not let the truth of these observations lead us again into making a flat rule. Logic to the contrary, it is a fact that many parents with some disturbances in their backgrounds do succeed in raising pretty healthy children. The reasons for this are not yet well understood. But we must be thankful that it is so, and that we are not inevitably confronted with a closed and vicious circle.

Life itself—time and growth—favor the second chance. Fortunate life events, which are of particular positive significance for



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the parents or the child, can bring about improvement or recovery. Time and growth may modify parent-child demands on each other, and can result in spontaneous improvement.

But in many instances, more directed activity is necessary. This activity begins with recognition of a problem and an alertness to understand it and correct it. Educational experiences afford many parents the necessary knowledge and self-awareness which is important as the first step toward the second chance. These may come through discussion with friends, through reading and through parent education groups. Under competent leadership, such group discussions make possible the acquisition of helpful knowledge, the diminution of guilt and the experience of seeing that other parents face similar problems but may have different attitudes toward them.

The assets of group education

When exposed to such new attitudes, parents may come to see their own problems in a new light. Such parents grow more understanding of the child, more patient in dealing with him, more sensitive to his needs, more realistic in their expectations, more ready to help the child face and deal with the problems which all children confront in growing up. These are parents who have basically healthy attitudes toward parenthood and toward their children and who, with strength and support, can modify their approach to the child. They make mistakes, out of their own unresolved, unconscious conflicts (for no one has completely resolved these), but both they and their child weather these because of their security with each other. Just as for the child some bad behavior in the course of growing up is normal, so parental errors are to be expected.

Attendance in parent education groups does not, by itself, assure improvement in parent-child problems. One specific limitation to the benefits of group learning is often the absence of fathers. Attendance by the mother may have many motivations.

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Too frequently, mothers attend for the prestige of belonging to such a group. Confession of errors, self-blame, may become ends in themselves instead of forces for change. Quick acceptance of new knowledge and attitudes, and facile verbalization, are not necessarily signs of progress. A healthy skepticism, and some critical resistance, are in many cases a natural part of the parent's struggle to integrate what she is learning and experiencing. Glib interpretations of behavior in others, without application to self, are not promising for change in one's own attitudes through group education. The mother's motives in attending, the degree of her own emotional involvement with the child, the part played by the father, the severity of the child's problems, the personal qualities and skill of the leader—these are some determinants of the effectiveness of group education.

Temporary upsets

Human relationships, even under ideal circumstances, are not without conflicts. Living close together in a family offers not only mutually satisfying experiences but may also provoke irritation, impatience, anger and rebuff. Neither parents nor children are perfect, or "paragons of virtue," and neither need feel guilty over minor skirmishes. Temporary upsets are painful, but they do not necessarily have damaging effects.

As parents learn more about the growing child, they can better differentiate between behavior disorders and symptoms which are transitory and those that tend to be fixed. Transitory disturbances, though upsetting to the parent, may be normal for the child at a given time and represent his efforts to cope with the problems that confront him. It may help to relieve the parent's anxiety if he understands that the child will outgrow this kind of behavior.

When further help is needed

When, however, the conflicts between parent and child are repetitive and continuous, and the ill feelings between them

persist and are not resolved, the second chance requires individual help from experts. Parents alone cannot be expected to cope with children's problems which are severe and pervasive. When a child's problems interfere with the activities normal for his age, when his patterns of behavior are rigid and fail to respond to improved handling by the parents or when the child has repeated physical symptoms for which there is no physical cause, individual treatment may be required for both parents and child.

More resources

Whatever the situation, parents have more opportunities to find help today than ever before. Counseling services in nursery schools, family agencies, child guidance and mental health clinics, or private psychiatric treatment are possible resources. Firm conviction that behavior and relationships in children and adults are modifiable, readiness to seek and use appropriate help, steadfast determination to persist in our efforts—these offer the best possibilities for success in our second chances.

Institute on child growth

Mrs. Aline B. Auerbach, Coordinator, Leadership Training and Parent Group Programs at the Child Study Association of America, served on the faculty of an Institute on Child Growth and Development, conducted by the Department of Maternal and Child Health, Harvard School of Public Health. The Institute, held from June 7-18, 1954, was attended by directors, consultants and other staff personnel from Divisions of Public Health Nursing in state Departments of Health and American Red Cross nursing representatives, supervisors and directors from many areas. In all, twenty-two states and territories were represented, including Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

Mrs. Auerbach met with the group for the last two days in "implementation sessions" to explore how the rich material presented during the Institute could be passed on to staff personnel, and the various ways in which it can be used most effectively in meeting with parents and expectant parents in classes and groups throughout the country.

Children's books—



that spark dramatic play

Ill be the Queen." "Good or wicked?" "Wicked, of course; the other dies too soon. You be sister Anne." "Can I be Rapunzel next time?"

Perhaps this recalls a time of wonder and delight that seems as far away as the old tales themselves. It is not, of course, very long ago, but meanwhile a generation has grown up that really has never experienced the zest of doing the play, the pantomime, the skit or the puppet show at home. True, the parents of today's children had "dramatics" at school or camp, or perhaps did "stunts" in community groups. But theirs was the generation of the family exodus—all roads led outward from the home—to movies, theaters, the dance and, of course, to sports. It was the grandparents' generation who, in their own homes, mimed and mimicked and recited and leaned dramatically over balconies.

Now the family seems to be coming home again. Whatever the cause of this return—television, suburban living, larger families and the wholesome concept of family life of these young post-war parents—the time is ripe to encourage family participation in activities that arise from and stimulate imagination and ingenuity.

When today's children come home from camp or summer group work with skits, pantomime or puppets, they bring skills which enterprising parents will use to keep the magic in the family. There are demon-

strable satisfactions from this old-new family pattern.

Many parents today are conscious of their children's dramatic activities. They see that in the youngest playing and acting are the same, that the shy child can be carried away by his success in a stunt, that mechanical-minded children delight in the "rigging." They are aware of the intensity and zeal of their young actors and often are eager for suggestions to further the lively art of homemade fun.

Books are available for this very purpose. Plays, pantomimes, skits, magic, puppetry and dramatized ballads—all these are sources of family "shows" and can be used for neighborhood gatherings, too. Stories told or read aloud, as a basis for play-acting, usually attract an all-star, self-appointed cast. Fairy tales (especially about princesses), dramatic Bible stories and other well-loved familiar tales can be used in this way.

In a home where creative effort is admired and applauded, much spontaneous play-acting will be an extension of the usual dress-up play, especially if the family respects and accepts as a matter of course sudden invitations to be audience. All this is good preparation for the "prepared" play in which the whole family can join.

Modern Comedies for Young Players, by Mildred Hark & Noel McQueen (Plays, Inc., 1951, \$3.50), is a good collection to

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use for this purpose. Its fifteen plays are concerned with the ordinary home doings of one family, the Saunders, and their two sons, aged 17 and 9. This cast can be changed and enlarged in the acting to suit the performing family, and the use of actual family jokes and situations might provide an immediacy that would have special values.

One Act Plays for All-Girl Casts, by Marjorie Paradis (Plays, Inc., 1952, \$2.50), offers the sort of plays, in a boarding school setting, that two or three sisters and their friends would enjoy doing.

Not all children work well in groups, or enjoy acting in plays. A seemingly undramatic child may, however, find this kind of outlet in individual stunts and trick performances. Old timers, like "Clara Belle the Flea," "Dark, Isn't It?" and "Horace," would transport the shy child to the limelight. These are treasures from *The Handbook of Skits and Stunts*, by Helen & Larry Eisenberg (Association Press, 1953, \$2.95), which is many-sided in its service. Books on magic do much for the lone eagle with deft hands, and *Magic*, by Alexander Van Rensselaer (Knopf, 1952, \$1.50), will set him on his way. Later, he will enjoy *Four Hundred Tricks You Can Do*, by Howard Thurston (PermaBooks, 1939, \$1.00), or *After-Dinner Science*, by Kenneth Swezey (McGraw-Hill, 1948, \$4.00), which employs scientific principles to do simple tricks at the table.

Puppet shows at home grow naturally from doll play for girls and craft and mechanical interests for boys. They can combine their talents to put on a show, with directions from *Puppets and Marionettes*, by Roger Lewis (Knopf, 1952, \$1.50). *The First Book of Puppets*, by Moritz Jagendorf (Watts, 1952, \$1.50), or *Marionettes, A Hobby for Everyone*, by Mabel & Les Beaton (Crowell, 1948, \$3.75), will delight them later.

For the gifted child who shies away from the average harum-scarum play, there is a small volume, *Dramatized Ballads*, by Janet Tobitt & Alice White (Dutton, 1937, \$2.75),

which is sufficiently full of flavor for the most highly selective taste. And for all of these young performers, *The First Book of Stage Costume and Make-Up*, by Barbara Beck (Watts, 1954, \$1.75), is full of valuable ideas.

Shadow play, that easiest and most effective form of home entertainment, is almost a lost art and should be revived. With no lines to learn, the action of each scene is determined in a preliminary huddle. Props needed are those any home can provide—a sheet hung in an archway or a wide doorway, a lamp (without a shade) on the floor several feet back; the audience sits before the sheet, and the actors pass back and forth behind it, between it and the lamp. In *Stunts and Skits*, mentioned above, there are hilarious suggestions for this kind of play.

Pantomime, in some families, can become an outgrowth of shadow play. It develops the ability to express by actions alone all

the requirements of the scene as planned. As a family activity, this type of play calls for imagination and ingenuity, but pantomime as an art has a long and honored history. Home pantomimes might well lead a youngster (and his family) into a stimulating search along these lines. If so, he will find the following rewarding and exciting: **Shadow Plays and How to Produce Them*, by Winifred H. Mills & Louise M. Dunn (Doubleday, 1938), **Marionettes, Masks and Shadows*, by the same authors (Doubleday, 1947), and **With Puppets, Mimes and Shadows*, by Margaret K. Soifer (Furrow, 1936).

Books of plays have perhaps their widest audience among children of the middle school years. For this age, the prepared play of seasonal, holiday or historical content is valuable for school, camp or club. *Holiday Plays for Special Days*, by Mildred Hark & Noel McQueen (Plays, Inc., 1947, \$3.00), is a good collection; *Christmas Plays for Young Actors*, by A. S. Burach (Plays, Inc., 1952, 75¢), is particularly useful for school around the holiday season; and *Holiday Programs for Boys and Girls*, by Aileen Fisher (Plays, Inc., 1953, \$3.50), contains, besides plays, much material for group reading or choral speaking. Favorite stories such as *Caddie Woodlawn* are available in play form, and parts of well-known books are the bases of plays to be put together by the children themselves. The fence-whitewashing scene from *Tom Sawyer*, and the story of Solomon and the two mothers from the Bible also have been used successfully.

For the teenager, theatricals can mean romance, social recognition or the first step in a long dream with all its yearning for greasepaint and the green room. Whether in school, social club or camp, the standards of critical appraisal of this age are often quite high, and much that appears in junior collections of plays is rejected. A fine and useful book is *Teen Theater*, by



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Author of *About Books for Children*

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will be discussed at the annual Children's Book Meeting of the Child Study Association of America, on Wednesday evening, November 17th. Details of the program and the place will be announced later.

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Child Study overseas

The Child Study Association has always been interested in looking at child care in the international, as well as the national, framework. In this connection, we feel that the use made of an article from the Fall 1952 issue of *CHILD STUDY* by the United States Information Agency is noteworthy. This article, "Creative Expression: A Discipline for Democracy," by Victor D'Amico, was reprinted by USIA for distribution to all its foreign offices for possible republication by the foreign press.



Here is an expert's reassuring and constructive advice on how to develop wholesome reading habits in children. Miss Frank, a member of the staff of the Child Study Association of America, presents a positive approach to TV and comics and shows how these media can become a bridge to books.

- Books from nursery to teen age
- What children read and why
- Reading and children's emotions
- The challenge of TV, movies, radio, comics
- Your role in the child's reading program
- Guiding the child to the books he most needs

by JOSETTE FRANK

reading consultant, lecturer, and author of
What Books for Children?

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Edwin & Nathalie Gross (Whittlesey, 1953, \$3.25), which contains, besides its six royalty-free plays, complete instructions for every aspect of their production. It is detailed and sound, and the advice tendered here by the obviously competent authors will serve young people in producing plays far beyond the scope of this book.

Books of adult plays are often drawn upon by teenagers, and those plays that have been successfully produced on Broadway are in demand. Collections such as *Best Plays of 1952-53*, edited by Louis Kronenberger (Dodd, Mead, \$4.50), lead naturally to teenage interest in group theater and summer theater activities.

Play-acting for the youngest is joyous and free, springing spontaneously from stories told or read aloud. Musical play, too, has a definite place, and even the musically untrained mother can spark this activity and share in it. There are books to help. *Music for Early Childhood*, edited by Osbourne McConathy & others (Silver-Burdett, 1953, \$3.28), comes with an album of records of its songs (\$4.55), but its soundest contribution lies in its suggestions to adults. Under this wise and understanding direction, the most hesitant parent can enjoy directing and sharing her child's early musical experiences. For the mother with some musical training, there is Satis N. Coleman's *Another Dancing Time* (John Day, 1954, \$2.75), which with her earlier *Dancing Time* (John Day, 1952, \$2.25), forms a good beginning to rhythmic activities for children.

Not every young television watcher has an insatiable desire to play with puppets. Not every living room need be the scene of lively family theatricals. But through books like these the whole pattern of shared fun at home can be extended beyond the spontaneity of the earliest years; and parents, however inexperienced, can participate with confidence.

NORA KRAMER

and BARBARA SCHATZKI

for the Children's Book Committee

Science says —

What the new psychology can mean to parents

By Anna W. M. Wolf

All parents want their children to grow up emotionally as well as physically healthy. They want their children to be free of those unfortunate character traits that spoil their good relations with others and prevent them from developing the best use of their powers. They want children who are outgoing and friendly, full of curiosity about the world at their doorstep. But this isn't enough. Parents hope, too, that when their children are grown up they will be able not only to work well but to love well, to live deeply as well as successfully, and to discover those rich spiritual resources within themselves that bring a sense of fulfillment.

This sounds like a large order, and it's true that parents forever set their sights high. They want only the very best for their children. But how do they go about achieving it? How does a healthy personality get started and flower into maturity? Is it a "gift" that comes by pure chance to some and not to others? Or is mental health mainly the result of the way a child is brought up, of his early influences? How can parents foster what is best in their children?

Though there are no final answers to these questions, the first half of the century

saw some promising beginnings. We at least have some important clues to work with, now. Parents, teachers and all others concerned with child development find more and more help in our ever-expanding knowledge about what goes into the making of a mature human being.

What the new psychology is not

This "new psychology" is known by many names. Parents who profess it are known as "modern" or "progressive" or "believing in psychology." It is hailed by some as the beginning of a wonderful new era and rejected by others as leading straight to delinquency. The new psychology has been the butt of much ridicule and is still subject

This estimate of what the new psychology should mean and what it should not mean to parents is especially pertinent in an issue of *Child Study* which attempts to re-examine some aspects of such an important child care concept as permissiveness. Mrs. Wolf's article is reprinted from *The Encyclopedia of Child Care and Guidance*, Edited by Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. Copyright, 1952, by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

to endless misunderstandings. A few words first about what the new psychology is *not* may help to correct these widespread misunderstandings.

To begin with, the "modern" approach to children does *not* imply any quarrel with common sense. All parents need the kind of naturalness, humor, balance and ability that the term implies to take simple, practical steps to help their children grow up. But we have learned that we can't always expect common sense alone to solve every childhood problem, that specialized knowledge can—if we learn to use it wisely—deepen our understanding of everyday happenings and can also prove an indispensable aid when a child's normal development is threatened.

The modern approach does *not* favor bringing up children without discipline. It does not, contrary to popular misconception, suggest letting them say or do anything they wish at any time or place. Nor does it hold that children always know better than their elders what's good for them. It doesn't consider the rights of parents or the comfort of other grownups unimportant, nor does it allow children to be as rude and inconsiderate as they please in the name of "self-expression."

What the new psychology is

What, then, does the new psychology actually have to say to us? In the first place, it has taught us to approach the whole problem of human behavior from a fresh angle. We are, for example, much less concerned with calling children "good" or "bad" than we used to be. We have found that labels don't get us anywhere. It isn't that we care any the less or have lost our standards of right and wrong, but rather that we now realize that a child who does not respond to the sensible and moderate measures that grownups ordinarily take to control him needs a different kind of help. When this happens we usually find that we cannot change his behavior without knowing first why he acts as he does. Only when we begin to understand the causes of "bad"

behavior can we begin to help a child to be good. "Bad" children, so it turns out, are usually unhappy, confused or emotionally disturbed children. Instead of scolding or punishing them, the solution usually lies in helping them find more satisfaction in life, both through encouraging them to use their own abilities and in guiding them to more satisfactory relations to other people.

Sometimes correcting the causes of misbehavior is relatively simple. For example, a child handicapped by poor eyesight may have so much difficulty at school that he feels inferior and defeated. Once the vision is corrected, he may go full speed ahead. Another child may have to be moved from a grade that is so much too hard or too easy for him that he gets bored and restless. Still another may lack friends with whom he can have fun, space for hobbies or outlets for energies that a good backyard or a boys' club might take care of. Or a lonely, apparently unsociable child may discover a talent for radio construction or for dramatics that opens up new vistas and gives him an assured and respected place among his friends.

But efforts like these aren't always successful. Sometimes the causes are complex, hidden from the ordinary gaze. They may lie deep in tensions between members of the family or misconceptions and confusions in the child's view of himself and his world. When a child defeats our best efforts to help him and persists in behavior that makes him and everyone around him miserable, then we have learned to turn to expert knowledge for help. Through child guidance clinics psychiatric help is becoming more and more available to parents, at least in the larger cities.

It seems likely that the foundations of mental health are actually laid in infancy. We now know through scientific study what we have always instinctively felt—that a baby needs a close relation to his mother, or to a motherly person who cares for him continuously. Evidence is steadily mounting that prolonged institutional care in an impersonal atmosphere, no matter

now hygienic from the physical standpoint, is profoundly damaging to a child's mental and physical health as well as to his intelligence. Even long periods of hospitalization away from all that means home, in an institution where he is deprived of the care and presence of his own mother, can retard a child's development. Such separation from his mother may jeopardize his belief in her constancy and protection, which are the rocks on which he will build—or fail to build—his relation to all other people and to society.

We also know that before a child can grow into a mature adult he must first be allowed to be a normal child. We must expect him to behave during childhood quite differently from grownups. Truthfulness, consideration for others, self-reliance, unselfishness, fairness, generosity and the other traits we associate with a mature individual—all these develop slowly, sometimes painfully.

In short, we are learning increasingly to accept children *as children*; we know that the business of being a parent calls for putting up with a certain amount of irritating or exasperating behavior on the thorny path to growing up. And we are more willing than were our grandparents to make compromises and adjustments with our children so that we can live together with greater enjoyment. Along with the willingness goes more appreciation of the unique charm of children, just because they are not like grownups but are impelled by different motives, move toward different goals and in many respects have different standards. What grownup in a house full of children doesn't yearn for a few hours of quiet instead of the often maddening sounds of boisterous play; for the well-ordered sensible routine in place of what seems the pointless dawdling of the young; for the cleared-out, neat toy shelves instead of collections of (to us) useless but (to them) prized objects; for reasonable conversation in place of giggling fits; for the children's having "worthwhile" friends instead of undesirable ones?

At the same time that we accept childish behavior as suitable to certain ages and stages, however, we know that children change as they grow and that what's healthy and acceptable at one age may be unhealthy at another. We expect a baby or even a two-year old, for example, to depend on his parents almost entirely for his daily wants and his inner serenity; but we look for somewhat different behavior from a five-year old, who should now be on the way to helping himself a bit and turning his vision toward the world outside the family. We know that it's quite usual for a four-year old to tell tall stories, but we get worried if a ten-year old is persistently untruthful. A typical boy of nine is scornful of girls—outwardly, anyway; he gangs up both aggressively and defensively with youngsters of his own sex. But at seventeen the same behavior suggests that something in his development has gone wrong.

Every step of the way parents need to know what is fair to expect of their chil-

ROOFS for the FAMILY

Eva Burmeister

Miss Burmeister, director of the Lakeside Center for Children in Milwaukee, tells us the story of a moving operation involving builders, architects, cement mixers, movers, landscapers, and residents of the Center—children, housemothers, caseworkers, cooks and another menage of cats, dogs, turtles, and goldfish. Leaving behind them a single 19th-century mansion, the Plymouth Rock of this glorious community was three modern cottages. Miss Burmeister charts her psychology of child care in cottage life, "where the child can relax, expand, try his wings. . ."

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dren at various ages; in infancy, in the toddler stage, during the school years, at adolescence. If they have this knowledge, they can then gear their expectations and demands accordingly and can be ready for those moments when they can actually help a child take the next step. But we know, too, that there is danger in pigeonholing children in their development. Exceptions are the rule and all generalizations are half-truths—a rough scale on which to measure any individual child. There are striking differences and irregularities in growth. We are aware that we must learn to see our own particular youngsters clearly, as they are—each one a unique human being.

At the same time we have become alert to the fact that markedly immature behavior is a danger signal if it persists beyond its normal span. A child of seven, even one who is intellectually precocious, is "immature" if his social behavior is that of a four-year old, just as truly as an adult is immature if he habitually behaves like an adolescent. If this immaturity persists, parents today feel a responsibility to find out the causes and to learn how the child can be helped to go forward.

Feelings are crucial

One of the old myths which the new psychology has dispelled is that good character is formed by consistently hammering "good habits" into children as early as possible. This mechanical approach has proved ineffectual. We have come to realize that, actually, children learn ways of kindness and courtesy, courage, self-control and all that's most important in life not by the drill system, but by watching the people who are close to them practice these ways themselves; even more important, by loving and being loved by them. How parents and children actually *feel* about each other is, we now know, the very core of how children will develop. "Training" is futile, rewards and punishments are futile, even "setting a good example" is ineffectual if the relationship between child and adult lacks warmth and sympathy. A child can

become disciplined only through the people he loves. Though we may all use rewards and punishments as emergency measures from time to time, these serve at best only as occasional reminders for children. They are useless the moment the parents come to rely on them as their principal means of discipline. They are worse than useless if in his heart a child has come to doubt the affection, the good will and the fairness of the grownups who administer them.

Children need discipline. They need it, that is, to know that there are limits to what they may do and that there is a force in their lives which makes these limits seem clear and reasonable. But if it is to be effective, this discipline must rest on the child's long experience of trusting his parents—on his belief in their affectionate interest, as proved by their willingness to listen to him and their sensitiveness to even those thoughts and feelings that may be beyond a child's power to explain. Against such a background, discipline reinforces a child's belief in his parents' love. Restraint or punishment comes not as an expression of dislike and revenge, or as the withdrawal of love, but actually as a proof of the parents' caring and wanting to help. The child's conviction that his parents really care is crucial. That is why effective discipline and eventual self-discipline depend on the basic soundness of feelings between parents and children. There are no "techniques," "systems" or "correct procedures" of any kind that can bring about wholesome emotional development unless a child feels that the grownups are for him rather than against him.

Helping a child to maturity

Once we come to accept children as children and to expect a step-by-step gradual progress toward maturity, we come also to be skeptical of the view that the "good" child is above all a polite, obedient and docile child. The mentally healthy child is "full of beans." With his great energy he wants to sample every phase of life and

test his powers through action. He wants to "go places"—often before he's really able. Yet it's important that grownups grasp the value of these impulses and, while keeping them under sensible control, do everything possible to preserve them. Real "goodness"—the capacity to live wisely and vigorously, to love deeply, to be self-controlled without becoming inwardly cramped and anxious—how is it developed? These things emerge slowly out of the raw material of human nature in a home that has succeeded in giving children a balanced diet of independence and restraint, of adventure and conformity.

Modern psychology, then, offers parents two main practical suggestions to build on: first, know what most children at a given age are like and gear your expectations to what seems fair; second, beware of misusing these standards. There are wide variations, and your own child may not fit the pattern. You will always need to be acutely aware of him as an individual in order to understand what he needs from you.

Another change which the modern view of children has fostered is our present attitude toward all that is primitive, instinctive, selfish, egocentric and often shocking and distressing in the behavior of young children. For generations, people who loved children usually refused to see the cruelty, the wanton aggression, the sexual preoccupations that are often quite apparent to those who observe closely and are willing to admit what they see. Others of that generation who were perhaps more honest viewed such behavior as a sign of original sin—"the old Adam in us all," they called it—to be nipped in the bud, punished severely and repressed by any means the moment it put in its appearance.

Today we have learned from the practical findings of psychiatry that these impulses in children are neither good nor bad *in themselves*; it is how they finally develop which is important. Through Freud and other psychiatrists and psychologists we have come to view the child's primitive behavior—his aggressiveness, his sexual man-

ifestations, even his cruelties—with more objective understanding. We are still aware, of course, that he needs guidance and the kind of control which neither threatens nor frightens. This is necessary if a child is to grow into a civilized human being. But it is *how* we do this that counts. Under favorable conditions, what was once selfishness in the child may furnish the motive power for action and achievement in the adult. What was once raw aggressiveness may develop into constructive energy. Early tendencies toward cruelty may be metamorphosed later into a tenderness toward suffering in man and beast. In human beings the crude sexual behavior of childhood matures and merges with love to serve not only the purposes of family life and all we mean by the tenderness of one human being for another, but also all that is softening and civilizing in mankind the world over.

We have also come to see how mental illness—including those character quirks anyone can observe—may be the result of too early and too severe repression of these same primitive impulses. When a child grows up healthy, when his sexual and his aggressive impulses become civilized and usefully directed, it is perhaps because his parents sensed what the child had to confront in himself. They learned to exercise controls gently, helping him *gradually* to modify his self-centered behavior. For we now have ample evidence that if training is too severe the child comes to feel unloved and rejected. When parents, in their efforts to teach right and wrong, succeed only in instilling an overwhelming sense of shame and worthlessness, then children are in

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danger of developing the feeling that nothing they ever do can be right or pleasing to their parents. This state of mind is a great obstacle to sound maturing.

So parents today have become increasingly aware that it is unwise to make children, especially very young children, ashamed of their feelings. They must, of course, help a child to control his *acts* by setting certain limits on what he may *do*, but they should guard against making him ashamed of his feelings. We are all aware, for example, that we cannot let a child express the full force of his anger by constantly hitting, teasing or bullying his friends or other members of the family. Some restraints must be provided. But it may also be of great value for a child to *talk* out his feelings to parents who can accept the fact that these impulses are a recurrent and expected part of childhood.

Take the case, for instance, of a boy who dislikes his grandmother and shows it by making a nuisance of himself every time she's with him. There is no way for his parents to force him to like her. But what they can do is allow him the chance to tell them what he feels about her, accept his feelings without blame, take practical measures to work out happier times between them when they are together—at the same time insisting that no matter what he *feels*, there are certain unkind things he may not *do*. This knowledge that his parents will both love and accept him as he is, at the same time that they help him toward self-understanding and maturer patterns of control, is the very basis of mental health.

Most children engage in sex play to a greater or lesser extent. Every parent feels instinctively that though some sex play may be inevitable it isn't wise to let it go on to the point where children get more and more excited and absorbed by it. At heart children are ashamed and frightened if their sex impulses get too far out of bounds. They need help not only in how to stop, but also some simple knowledge about their bodies and their sex feelings to help clear up whatever confusions they may have.

Parents have learned that it's best to answer children's questions fully and freely, and to try to make boys and girls feel that curiosity about their emerging sex feeling is right and natural.

The new psychology and child care

What about parents themselves? What are they learning from psychology today that has direct application to their own lives?

First of all, they are learning that what they are as men and women, as husbands and wives, as friends and citizens, will have a great deal to do with how their children develop. They are finding out that children aren't "born that way" so much as that they "get that way" through constant interactions within the family and through countless subtle ways in which parents' own personal problems and tensions sift down to influence their children's personality development. When a child is constantly in trouble or fails to develop as he should, the question always arises: what part are the parents playing in the situation? In what ways have they unwittingly contributed to the child's problem?

We are coming to understand that parents and children are inextricably bound up with one another. A child is literally part of his parents. His relationship to them is a basic and potent force in setting the direction of his development. When parents have fully grasped the part they play, they will be aware that to help their children they must learn to know themselves more deeply than ever before. This is why professional child guidance workers need to understand the parents if they are to help the children. Parents and children are inseparable. It is hard to give any lasting help to a young child if he must then depend almost completely on parents who have little understanding of a situation in which they themselves play a vital role.

As they become more aware of this interlocking relationship, parents become better able to approach with wide-open eyes whatever problems arise in their children's

lives. Just as they consult a doctor without hesitation when a child is ailing physically, so they now turn to those trained in child guidance when they sense that their child's emotional development has struck a snag. In both physical and psychological fields they of course try simple home remedies first—the common-sense approach that is so indispensable. When a child has a cold we may give him some aspirin or see what a day or so in bed can accomplish. But if he doesn't get better we call a doctor. And so, too, when a child is emotionally disturbed. We remind the bed-wetter to go to the toilet last thing before bedtime; we find the best possible play outlets for the destructive, aggressive child; we try to show the dishonest child that he need not fear to acknowledge mistakes. But if, in spite of everything we do, troubles still persist, then we call for professional advice.

It may seem at times as if modern knowledge has added to the burdens of parents. In addition to the physical ills of childhood, we are now aware of the danger of emotional ailments and we realize to what extent these have their sources in the experiences of early childhood in which, we ourselves as parents are so deeply involved. Has this knowledge made the job harder instead of easier? Has it merely increased the anxiety with which parents approach the task of rearing children? For some the temptation has been strong to turn their backs on new knowledge, to run away from it all and pin their hopes on old-fashioned

remedies. But most parents today do not retreat to this easy and ineffectual escape. Instead, while using the experience and wisdom of the past, they continue to search out more knowledge as a means of ensuring the best emotional growth of their children, just as they now seek medical advice to keep their babies well.

Our understanding of the basic conditions that make for mental health will increase as we become aware of its importance, as we appropriate more money for necessary research and as education interprets and spreads this knowledge. But in the last analysis, parents are the ones most concerned. It is they who are called on to translate scientific knowledge into day-to-day living with their children. Parents today seem on the whole wiser, more conscientious than ever before; they go about their jobs more courageously and more intelligently. If now and then they seem to lose their balance, they manage somehow to regain it and find again the means to use their knowledge and go forward.

In the field of physical health, scientific medicine has saved countless lives; it has proved its superiority over common-sense home remedies in treating sick people. Though our knowledge of mental health is comparatively recent, it is the hope of all not only that we may one day learn to heal the mentally sick, but that we may also show the way for human beings to lead lives that bring them deeper and more lasting satisfactions.



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Parents' Questions

These questions are selected and discussed
by the Child Study Association
staff, and the answers written by its various members

What about tantrums?

My two-and-a-half-year-old took me completely by surprise when she had a real tantrum for the first time in her life. We were getting ready to leave the playground, when she suddenly threw herself down, and yelled and kicked and wouldn't listen. I practically had to drag her home, howling all the way. When she finally quieted down, she sobbed something about not wanting to leave her friend who was staying on. I didn't punish her, as I saw she was upset enough, but perhaps I should have. I don't want her to get to be like the boy of five next door who has tantrums whenever he can't get his way. Mrs. L.Z.R.

Small children often behave this way when they suddenly seem to find new meanings in old situations, and usually when the new meaning is a clearer recognition that they are being deprived of something, or even denied something. The tantrum is their childish expression of anger and rage and perhaps sorrow all mixed together. It is usually not a deliberate attempt to be-devil grownups, as some parents think, but rather an outpouring of uncontrollable feelings in the face of a situation that is too much for them.

It is often hard to know just what is so overwhelming, as children see situations

very differently than we do, of course. If one can, one should try to find out, or if the child can't put his feeling into words as yours did eventually, one should try to figure it out in some way. But the cause may be something unavoidable, something that the child will have to accept and to bear. This takes time, and perhaps a little more maturity and understanding on the child's part. In the meantime, one must help the child as best one can to stop the scene—by diverting (if it will work), by taking him in one's arms and loving him (if he will let you), or just by standing by quietly till the storm begins to abate and then quickly helping him to go on to the next thing with a minimum of recriminations.

You were right not to punish your child, as parents sometimes do. Such things as slapping, for example, or being left in a room with the door closed merely make matters worse; the child then feels not only overwhelmed by his own feelings but abandoned as well. She needs to know that you expect her to stop, and are *helping* her to do so. If she feels this, she will probably not have tantrums very often.

If a child has many such scenes, and if they continue as he gets older (like the boy next door), the parents would do well to talk the situation over with a trained counselor.

Bright, but not active

My husband and I are concerned because our three-and-a-half-year-old son, who is a bright, physically well-developed little boy, seems to us to be slow about attempting to do things. He seems cautious and almost fearful about running, jumping and climbing, and hardly ever tries to make or build things by himself. He talked early and likes being read to, going to museums, parks, etc. He asks endless questions about things. Both my husband and I have tried to answer his questions fully and accurately and we believe he has exceptional understanding and remembers most of what he learns. Is our worry about his not "doing things" justified? If so, how can we help him to enjoy activity more? Mrs. R.E.L.

It is not unusual for intelligent, sensitive children such as your son to surpass in "knowing" and to feel lack of confidence in "doing and using." Parents' concern develops from the expectation that physical and social performance should equal intellectual performance, when actually children do not usually develop evenly on all levels.

When there is marked difference in intellectual and motor ability it may have come about because parents, in their pleasure over the child's alertness and interest in learning, have put too much stress on giving him information. Sometimes the child's drive to explore for himself has been sacrificed in favor of learning second hand, i.e. by being told the answers. When one realizes how many *new* things a child learns about daily, which he must explore and test, it becomes clear that he should not be given the additional burden of a great deal of factual knowledge. Even though he asks many questions he is usually satisfied with simple, brief answers. He will acquire more extensive information later.

If it can be arranged, it is usually helpful to a child who is tentative about motor activity to have a chance to play where there is plenty of space and opportunity to explore his surroundings at his leisure, as is

possible in a rural setting or at the seashore. Even indoors the child may be provided with materials with which "to do" and usually will respond if parents show interest and do not have set expectations about the results he should achieve.

Tidiness at camp and at home

My eleven-year-old daughter has just come back from camp where all summer she made her bed and kept her bunk and belongings neat as a pin. Now she reverts to all her untidy habits; at home she seems to have no sense of responsibility about her own things or the necessary chores. Is there something wrong with my handling of her, of her feeling about her home, that she can't do here as she does at camp?

Mrs. H.B.

This is a rather common complaint: feelings of responsibility in group living—as at camp—just don't seem to carry over into home life. The group standards at camp provided an incentive she felt she must reach up to, while at home she feels, quite rightly, that she can relax and "be herself." It is, in a way, a reaction from having to be on her best behavior all summer.

If her lack of responsibility inconveniences other members of the family, if she is shirking her fair share of the chores which others have to do, it would be best to talk this over with her and try to help her see this. If she has resentments or grievances (real or fancied), these would come out in such a talk and thus, perhaps, clear the air. Nagging and constant reminders may only make matters worse. If others in the family do their share, she may gradually see the fairness of doing hers, too.

But if her untidy room or lack of order affects only her own things, it may be as well not to be too demanding, and to trust in her own developing aesthetic sense to come to the rescue. As she begins to care more about her appearance and her clothes she is likely also to *want* her room to be at-

tractive. For some girls this awareness comes sooner than for others; but whenever it does come it will provide the incentive for jacking up her own standards of behavior. It's hard to be patient, but it is comforting to know that many very untidy little girls grow up to be very tidy housekeepers.

Parting from a pet

My husband now has a job abroad which means we will be moving from place to place several times in the next year. My son, aged eleven, is heartbroken because it means parting from his dog whom he loves dearly. It really seems to us impractical to take Bruce along. He is a large animal, needing space to roam in. Moreover, he is quite old and the veterinarian doubts that he would be well or comfortable doing a good deal of travelling. Mrs. M.P.K.

If you are really sure there's no way of taking Bruce along, talk it all over with your son and explain fully. Give him the feeling that you and his father have looked at the question from all sides and have realized how hard the parting will be for all. Remember that a child *can* live with disappointment—even with sorrow. Bitterness will be lasting only if he feels he's being tricked or deceived in some way, or that his parents haven't really cared enough to try to work out the practical problems. Get his suggestions for placing Bruce in a good home. If there's no one you know who wants him, an animal Humane Society or an ad in the paper may help. If you find a home for him, you might ask the new owners to write to your boy now and then how Bruce is doing.

If the dog is too old to be wanted by, or happy in, a new home, it may be that the time has come to "put him out of the way." This should certainly not be done until other measures have been tried, but every dog lover has to face the fact that a dog's

life is short. If it becomes apparent that this is the only way, as the time draws near the child should be prepared for this and helped to realize that it is kinder to help an animal off with a drug than to let him drag out a miserable life.

When the actual day comes to send for the veterinarian, you will have to gauge whether it's best for your son to be around at the time or to manage it yourself in his absence. Even if you choose the latter course, you should manage so that when he comes home some day and finds his old friend gone forever he won't really be surprised. Probably he'll take it better than you feared, although there may be a stormy period during which he feels resentment toward his father for taking the new job or even toward himself for agreeing to have Bruce put away.

Be sympathetic but don't talk too much. Help him with whatever consolations like "dog heaven" he chooses to invent.

Group work for teenagers

An interesting piece of source material has been offered by the New York City Youth Board in the form of a monograph titled *Reaching Teen-Agers Through Group Work and Recreation Programs*. Available from the Youth Board, 500 Park Avenue, New York 22, for \$1.00.

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Book review

The World's Good: Education for World-Mindedness

By Carleton Washburne

New York: John Day, 1954. \$4.00.

As an educational philosopher with the gift of expressing himself clearly, Dr. Washburne is unusually well qualified to describe the complex fundamentals of progressive education. His purpose in this current book is to give teachers and leaders of youth practical things to do which will direct our young people toward a vision of worldwide cooperation. His theme is the duty of everyone concerned with the education of children to help them see the need and significance of well-being the world over. He expresses himself with intensity and eloquence, yet the terminology is always simple and the suggestions readily applicable.

He begins by describing the threefold emotional needs of the individual: the need for self-expression, for security and for social integration. Dr. Washburne then shows, by examples of classroom situations, how teachers can help to fulfill these needs for the individual child. Explicit definitions and practical techniques make this section valuable to all teachers who agree with Dr. Washburne that the well-being of the world begins with healthy experiences in childhood.

The author then considers the functions of social integration, social consciousness and group identification, all in the context of the interdependence of people and nations. Logically, this focus leads the author into a consideration of prejudice. The pages devoted to an explanation of the origins of prejudice, techniques for overcoming it and

suggestions for developing constructive attitudes are perhaps the most valuable in the whole book. For Dr. Washburne, the classroom is the laboratory of human relations and it is within this setting that the foundations for world unity should be developed.

The remainder of the first half of the book examines the fundamentals of our educational system, and of democratic living, and discusses the value of interdependent living, our common humanity and the sacredness of individual differences.

Unfortunately, the following section, which deals in part with communist doctrine and ideological conflicts, is digressive and discursive. Because of their remoteness from the actual classroom, these chapters are likely to be of less immediate help to the teacher.

A full and complete explanation of the United Nations Organizations composes the second part of this volume. While this is no doubt valuable reference material, the treatment does not approach the level of the opening chapters to which one returns for the clear and positive statement of principles that is so refreshing in a time of equivocation. It is an achievement, too, to provide for every teacher ways of developing the fundamentals of world cooperation in young people, as Dr. Washburne has done in this volume.

JANET CHASE
for the Bibliography Committee

Spiritual Values in Camping

By Clarice Bowman.

New York: Association Press, 1954. \$3.00.

One of the most widely discussed issues for parents and educators is the question of spiritual values for our children. Aware of the significance of this subject, Clarice Bowman has written an understanding and helpful book, addressed to camp directors and personnel, on one of its aspects.

The subject is introduced by a history of the camping movement in the United

States. Explaining carefully the development of trends in organized camping, the author emphasizes the role of camp in the current educational picture. For her, camping must now "come of age" and "develop a program which will help children become more fully themselves," and one which involves the development of spiritual values.

This covers much more than an appreciation of nature. Although love of nature may be a fundamental step toward spiritual awareness, it must be supplemented by an appreciation of music, art and literature. Even more important is the value of group living and an emphasis on human understanding. Here is where the author makes her greatest contribution. Her insistence on "finding oneself in relation to others," because spiritual values begin with persons, is an inspiring evaluation of human relationships. Any camp director or counselor who reads this book thoughtfully will find it not only a pleasurable experience but also one of lasting value.

One outstanding difficulty is finding and training personnel mature enough to provide the right attitude for young children in this basic area. Miss Bowman does not overlook this obstacle. She does, however, try to lessen it by following the outline of desirable qualifications for camp personnel, with a program for the training of personnel that is extremely feasible and practical. Not only here, but in many other phases of the camping program, Miss Bowman offers sound guidance toward the goal: that "camp should offer bedrock realities instead of ersatz values."

JANET CHASE

for the Bibliography Committee

The Unmarried Mother in our Society: A Frank and Constructive Approach to an Age-Old Problem

By Sara B. Edlin.

New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1954.
\$3.00.

During the forty years in which Mrs. Edlin was director of the Lakeview Home for

Unmarried Mothers, many changes took place, not only within the walls of the Home, but in the general attitude of society towards these girls.

In the earlier days the unwed mother was treated as an outcast, "exiled" into institutions which reflected this severity by the drab, cheerless atmosphere, unbecoming uniforms and strict daily routines. Mrs. Edlin, a sensitive woman with much vision, soon developed recreational and vocational programs. Walls were brightened, uniforms discarded and casework assistance was offered to each girl to help her through this difficult time and to assist her in making a more successful adjustment to her environment after leaving the Home.

Much of the material in this book is drawn from case histories and letters written by the girls. In discussing the typical present-day unmarried mother at Lakeview, Mrs. Edlin found that although the economic backgrounds and extenuating circumstances varied widely, the basic underlying factor in each case had been an unsatisfactory parent-child relationship. Most of these girls were emotionally immature, had had disappointing social relationships and had either felt or experienced parental rejection, overprotection or inability to meet excessive parental demands. By becoming pregnant they unconsciously were seeking revenge, wishing to punish their parents, but then to be taken back home on a new and improved basis.

With much sensitivity and understanding Mrs. Edlin discusses the painful conflicts facing each mother on the disposition of her baby. Some mothers felt a profound need to keep their child as the one thing they could love and be loved by, others "were not mothers longing for their child but children longing for their mothers."

The greatest value of this readable book lies in Mrs. Edlin's thorough appraisal of this problem and her honest recognition of its many yet unresolved aspects.

HELENE S. ARNSTEIN

for the Bibliography Committee

New books about parenthood and family life

*Selected by the Bibliography Committee of the CSAA.
Mrs. Anna W. M. Wolf, Staff Consultant. Mrs. Jean Rex,
Chairman.*

DEMOCRACY IN THE HOME. By Christine Beasley. Association Press, 1954. 242 pp. \$3.50. An interesting approach to the field of family relations through the application of the basic principles of democracy to everyday family living.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHILD CARE AND GUIDANCE. Edited by Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. Doubleday, 1954. 1016 pp. \$7.50. In clear, non-technical language this comprehensive volume covers all phases—physical, psychological, emotional and educational—from birth through adolescence. More than 1000 original entries arranged alphabetically, plus 30 chapters on the basic aspects of child development by leading authorities. Illustrated.

HOW TO BE A WOMAN. By Lawrence K. & Mary Frank. Bobbs Merrill, 1954. 144 pp. \$2.75. Paper bound edition, Maco. 75¢. Woman's many-sided human potentialities presented with realism and freshness; a guide to the satisfying fulfillment of her role in our society.

HOW TO HELP THE SHUT-IN CHILD: 313 Hints for Homebound Children. By Margery D. McMullin. Dutton, 1954. 192 pp. \$2.75. Over three hundred imaginative and practical games, hobbies, activities and entertainments for use with the bedridden or home-bound child.

HOW TO JUDGE A SCHOOL: Handbook for Puzzled Parents and Tired Taxpayers. By William F. Russell. Harper, 1954. 143 pp. \$2.50. A plea for a more considered evaluation of our schools based on research on how children learn.

HOW WE FOUGHT FOR OUR SCHOOLS. A Documentary Novel. By Edward Darling. Norton, 1954. 255 pp. \$3.00. A challenging account of how one community worked to preserve democratic values in its public schools.

KNOW YOUR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL. Edited by Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Macmillan, 1954. 188 pp. \$3.00. The "newer education" comes alive for parents and teachers through descriptions of real children and real teachers in actual school situations.

THE MIND ALIVE. By Harry & Bonaro Overstreet. Norton, 1954. 333 pp. \$3.75. The Overstreets bring together their special skills for simple interpretation of psychological insights into the functioning of a healthy and productive personality.

ON EDUCATION AND FREEDOM. By Harold Taylor. Abelard-Schuman, 1954. 320 pp. \$3.50. An educational philosopher and college president expresses his opinion on the controversial issues in American education.

POWER OF WORDS. By Stuart Chase. Harcourt, Brace, 1954. 308 pp. \$3.95. The author uses his unique and charmingly simple method of expression to present the problems of human communications. The chapters on group dynamics and the child at school are especially noteworthy.

SPIRITUAL VALUES IN CAMPING. By Clarice M. Bowman. Association Press, 1954. 240 pp. \$3.00. Provides valuable insights and suggestions to camp personnel for establishing sound spiritual values through an awareness of nature and man in the world around us as a part of the whole education of a child.

TELEVISION IN SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND COMMUNITY. By Jennie Waugh Callahan. McGraw-Hill, 1954. 339 pp. \$4.75. A thorough and comprehensive survey of the developments and activities in educational television stations throughout the United States. Current treatment and an invaluable source of reference for those engaged in non-commercial stations.

THE WORLD'S GOOD: Education for World-Mindedness. By Carlton Washburne. John Day, 1954. 301 pp. \$4.00. An able but simple restatement of a philosophy of education based on a knowledge of child development is a valuable section of this book, the primary purpose of which is to arouse teachers to the need to educate for "world-mindedness."

YOUR CHILD AND HIS ART: A Guide for Parents. By Viktor Lowenfeld. Macmillan, 1954. 186 pp. \$6.50. Based on parents' concerns about art in school and at home, and art and the development of personality, this well-illustrated book should be most helpful in fostering children's creative expression from childhood through adolescence.

YOUR CHILD'S READING TODAY. By Jovette Frank. Doubleday, 1954. \$3.95. A thoughtful discussion, by an authority in the field, of children's reading needs and tastes from the nursery age to the teens. Extensive annotated lists of the best books to be had.

Report of the Executive Director

given at the Annual Membership Meeting,

June 3, 1954, of the Child Study Association of America

I HAVE the honor to present a brief report on the Association's activities in its 65th year.

It has been an eventful year—one in which we have been able to reach out toward new goals while continuing to build on the solid foundations laid down during the past. The clear focus of all our planning and doing has been, and continues to be, *the family*. As we serve parents, helping them create a climate in their homes in which children can grow happily, we in turn keep on learning from parents about the new concerns and problems which beset them.

The continued vitality of our program rests on this closeness to parents. But vitality needs to be implemented by validity; and the continued validity of our program stems from the Association's readiness to test, to absorb and interpret the new insights, knowledge and skills being developed by the increasing number of disciplines which concern themselves with personality growth and family patterns.

This has been most definitely the case in the steady personal contact with parents: our individual counseling service and parent group programs.

Counseling service

In counseling, there has been a comprehensive reorganization in order to focus our service more effectively on early prevention, on building on positive strength rather than on the treatment of pathology.

This has always been the goal of this service, but it is characteristic of the psychological sciences that, much as we have known about the origin and treatment of mental ills, the field only now is learning to identify what constitutes mental health. Only now are we learning how we can build on the strong and sound components of the personality.

The reorganized counseling service began its activities in the Spring of 1953. Obviously it is too early to arrive at even a tentative evaluation. We can, however, report that an increasing proportion of the parents who come to us meet the criteria for what we have tried to define as healthy and average. The service appears to be most ap-

propriate for parents of pre-school children, and we have been heartened by the number of fathers who have taken part in the counseling process.

As is wise in any new venture, we began cautiously. The service now seems to be on its way and we are presently planning for careful evaluation of the project's further development by a competent research worker.

Parent groups and leadership training

In our parent group program, we have continued the discussion groups that meet weekly at our headquarters for a period of twelve to fifteen weeks. We have worked also with groups in different community settings, including young parents in a typical new suburban housing development and a small industrial community where we work through the adult education program of the school board.

Our major efforts in the parent group field this year, however, have been devoted to strengthening and extending the program of training leaders of parent groups.

In this program, we also are proceeding with caution. Having begun, two years ago, with the training of social workers, we extended the program during this past year to a group of especially selected personnel from the education field (guidance workers, nursery school directors and directors of religious education) and took preliminary steps toward a similar program for public health nurses. (I may add that such a program is now under way in collaboration with, and support from, the New York State Health Department and the United States Children's Bureau.) Through these trainees, all of whom conduct parent groups in their own agencies in the second part of the training program, we have been able to test our methods of parent education in a wide variety of neighborhoods: in congested areas, with non-English speaking parents and with minority groups, to name but a few.

This demonstration project has aroused much interest throughout the country, and once more the Child Study Association of America has taken a position of leadership. It has been presented at national meetings and described in national jour-

nals. Our pamphlet, "Parent Group Education and Leadership Training," is recognized as a thoughtful and provocative contribution to the field. An increasing number of requests for information and consultation are received from community groups and family agencies throughout the country.

Publications

Two new publications were issued during the year: "The Controversial Problem of Discipline," by Katherine M. Wolf, and a completely revised edition of "When Children Ask About Sex," and both were very much in demand.

Our magazine, *CHILD STUDY*, continues to be our spokesman, not only in the United States, but also in forty-three foreign countries. Our editorial policy has been to deal as much with basic problems of personal growth—as in our recent issue on the significance of the religious experience in the lives of our children—as with the more practical aspects of family life and parenthood.

Bibliography committee

Our Bibliography Committee issued during the year a careful revision of our leaflet, "A Parents' Bookshelf." That it is again out of print, and a new revision under way, testifies to the fact that the Child Study Association provides a useful service to parents in helping them to find their way through the confusing avalanche of literature directed to parents.

Children's book committee

The work of our Children's Book Committee is even more significant. *The Holiday Storybook*, published during the year, has been a tremendous success. As usual, the Committee published its annual list of children's books, revised its special list of "Bible Stories and Books about Religion for Children" and contributed helpful articles to *CHILD STUDY* magazine. Several publishers came to the Committee for consultation.

Cooperation with other organizations

Time does not permit full discussion of other aspects of our work—among them the many consultative services requested by a wide range of organizations. Of particular concern, too, is our desire to cooperate effectively with other national agencies and coordinating groups, such as the Adult Education Association, the National Council on Family Relations, the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the National Conference of Social Work, with all of which we have carried committee responsibilities.

Internationally, the Association has assumed formal responsibilities with the World Federation

of Mental Health and informally has cooperated with UNESCO, UNICEF and with many visitors from foreign shores.

Conference

For many of our friends, the Annual Conference has always been the clearest example of the leadership the Association gives to the field of parent education. The topics of the last two conferences—"Personal Growth and the Pressure to Conform," and "Courage: Its Roots in Family and Community Living"—indicate to what extent these meetings have reflected broad problems of concern to all parents in our day.

Similarly, the All-Day Conference for Workers in Parent Education, which immediately follows the large conference, has increasingly become a benchmark in the field.

We live in an age of drastic changes in personal living, in community affairs and on the international scene—an age of astonishing discoveries in the natural and social sciences and of a bewildering lag in putting knowledge to work. On behalf of my colleagues on the staff I want to assure our friends and supporters of our continued dedication to the ideals which have guided the Association through its illustrious past. It is our conviction that the particular task we have chosen, if discharged with energy, integrity and skill, will help many of today's children to become adults who will know better than we how to live in freedom."

At this same meeting, Otto Klineberg, M.D., gave a highly significant speech on the relation of developments in the fields of psychology and child care to international understanding, which we hope to publish in full in a coming issue of *CHILD STUDY*. A member of CSAA's Board of Directors, Dr. Klineberg, Professor of Social Psychology, Columbia University, is presently on leave serving as consultant to UNESCO in Paris.

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Attention, parents in the New York area . . .

Parent Discussion Groups

The CHILD STUDY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA continues to conduct education groups for parents at its Headquarters office, 132 East 74th Street, in New York City. The purpose of these groups is to give parents the opportunity to meet together to share their questions and their experiences under the guidance of skilled and informed leaders.

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